

Bull Selection
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Selection of your herd bull is a very important task as a cow-calf producer. It has been said that the herd bull is half of the herd, due to the fact that he supplies half of the genetic makeup of the entire calf crop.

Bull selection should be based on genotypic and phenotypic traits. If Expected Progeny Differences are available they should be a priority in selecting bulls. First, evaluate your herd's strengths and weaknesses, for example; weaning weights, milking ability, birth weights, etc. Select which traits need improvement, and make those a priority when looking at the data. Also, consider accuracy of the data, the more offspring a bull has in production, the greater the accuracy and more reliable the numbers.

Visual selection is important once the bull has met the previous criteria. Structural soundness is essential, muscling and conformation is extremely important. Remember that bigger is not always better! Lastly, consider disposition and attitude.

When buying bulls make sure that the bull has passed a breeding soundness evaluation, and that the breeder is willing to guarantee that he is sound.