

# BullSense

April 2009

## Keeping ahead of the beef production curve.

At Beefbooster we're always trying to keep you up to date on the latest technological developments in the cattle industry. So I was interested to attend a recent workshop on carbon credits, or "offsets", from agriculture for large greenhouse gas emitters in Alberta. The workshop dealt with the formation of a Cattle Residual Feed Intake Protocol. Residual Feed Intake (RFI) is the difference between an animal's actual feed intake and its expected feed requirements for maintenance and growth. Cattle with low RFI consume less feed at the same level of production as high RFI cattle. Since they consume less feed, they also produce less methane gas and less manure. Beefbooster has been working with the "Alberta Bovine Genomics Program" at the University of Alberta to develop breeding values for more feed-efficient animals saving costs as well as reducing the environmental impact of beef production.

I also sat in on a meeting concerning the "Beef InfoXchange System" (BIXS) that is being developed by the Canadian Cattlemen's Association as part of their "Canadian Beef Advantage" strategy. This pilot project is exploring voluntary methods of sharing information among the various segments of the cattle industry. Charlie Gracey, ALMA Board member, recently explained to me that determining a fair price, "Requires that buyer

and seller have the same information at the same time." The development of an information exchange system will give the cow/calf producer a good tool to make better decisions when marketing their cattle.

Since the collection and transfer of information will become increasingly important to the industry, Beefbooster is developing a

system to electronically transfer data between the ranch and a central database. This calving season some of our breeders will be testing our first version of an electronic calving book.

This is the second year that Beefbooster will have DNA scores on bulls offered for sale. In addition, all the bulls have been tested for BVD PI. The use of genetic markers allows for the selection of traits that are hard to measure (RFI, carcass traits) and traits that are not highly heritable (fertility). The incorporation of

DNA into our breeding system has already had positive results. The U of A study showed that by using DNA with phenotypic measurements, you increase the selection accuracy of the trait. In birth weight and weaning weight there was a 17% increase in accuracy if both parents were known and 10% overall increase in accuracy if one parent was known. The accuracy of the EBV (Expected Breeding Value) is also increased with the use of DNA markers. We are working with the University of Alberta to



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(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

incorporate DNA markers into our selection index and determine the economic weights of the different traits.

As to this year's bulls, the first round of the selection process is now complete and preliminary information on the bulls is posted on our website under sales. Final sale catalogues will be posted on

April 22, 2009. You'll also find more interesting information on the Beefbooster website, about Residual Feed Intake and DNA markers as well as the price of bulls and sale day information. 🐄

*Jennifer Stewart-Smith is CEO of Beefbooster*

## Beefbooster Spring Draw Bull Sale

To attend the Beefbooster Spring Draw Bull Sale on March 28th and 29th, make sure you have submitted your 2009 contract. For more information go to [www.beefbooster.com](http://www.beefbooster.com) or call 1-800-668-1529.

Sale Dates:

M1 Selection Day - April 28, 2009

M4 Selection Day - April 29, 2009

M2/M3 Selection Day - April 30, 2009

2009 Spring Bull Prices:

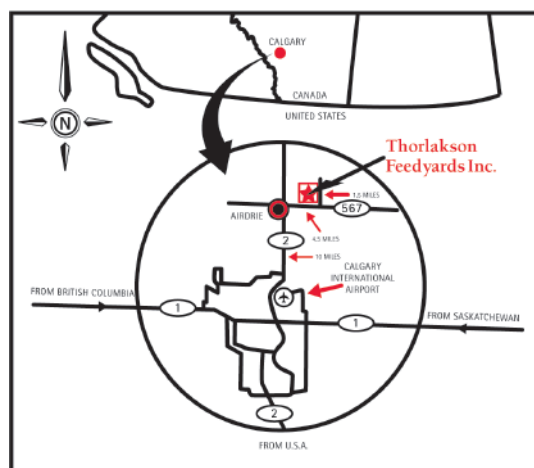
Red: \$2,750      Orange: \$2,600      Yellow: \$2,450

**New for 2009 - Open sale invitation for everyone**

On April 30th, an open invitation is extended to producers interested in learning more about Beefbooster bulls. Come early at 9 a.m. for bull viewing and stay for a free lunch – plus you can network with some of the most progressive beef producers in the business. Even if you haven't signed a contract, come on out. See you there!

Sale is at the Thorlakson Feedyards

From Airdrie, head east on secondary highway 567, then north (left) at the Thorlakson Feedyards sign for 1.5 miles.



[www.CattlemenConnect.com](http://www.CattlemenConnect.com)

Share your experience with other beef industry professionals on this new website.

The CattlemenConnect website is where cattlemen across Canada and around the world connect with each other to exchange ideas and best practices.

Whether you're a purebred breeder, cow/calf producer, feedlot operator or order buyer, you can tap into innovative ways to build a successful cattle business. On CattlemenConnect.com you can also engage in real-time dialogue and compare notes with other beef producers.

The website was established to give beef producers a meeting place where they can speak openly about the issues we face. Maybe you'd like to find out if other beef producers still see value in purebreds.

Or maybe you'd like to discuss how the economic downturn is impacting the cattle industry.

The Forum is divided into several Topic areas to make it easy to find subject areas that are of interest to you.

CattlemenConnect is also collecting information in multiple short surveys. The responses are compiled and shared on the website. Just click Survey on the home page and start adding your knowledge and operational know-how to the pool of information.

CattlemenConnect is proudly sponsored by Beefbooster and Igenity® where knowledge is power. The more knowledge you, the beef producer has in your back pocket, the more the Canadian beef industry will benefit. 🐄