

A Project to Produce Calves from Selected Historical Angus Bulls

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Introduction

As part of the 50th anniversary of the McNay Research Farm, cows were inseminated with semen from Angus bulls of the 1950s and the 1970/1980s. The goal was to produce calves from Angus bulls that were popular 50 years ago and 25 years ago for viewing at the McNay Research Farm's 50th Anniversary celebration in September 2006.

Materials and Methods

Dr. William P. Switzer, Ames, was asked to assist in identifying bulls and locating the semen. Dr. Switzer is a retired ISU veterinary researcher and avid Angus enthusiast. After considerable difficulty, he was able to help in securing a donation of a few ampules of frozen semen from Neal Smith, Walnut, IA for two Angus bulls from the 1950s—Ballot of Belladrum and Bardolier 532 of Wilton. The semen was “in an old semen tank that had been handed down to him.” For the 1970/1980s, bulls were selected from the top ten bulls of the era based on the number of calves registered. Schearbrook Shoshone and Pine Drive Big Sky were the two bulls that produced calves.

Results and Discussion

Although the semen from the 1950s was evaluated as fair to poor quality, calves were produced—four calves from Ballot of Belladrum and three calves from Bardolier 532 of Wilton. Only three calves were produced from the 1970/1980s bulls (Table 1). All the calves were born in spring 2006. Ballot of Belladrum was a Scottish-bred bull that reportedly won the 1958 Royal Highland Livestock Show in Edinburgh, Scotland and was later imported to the U.S. His mature 4-year old liveweight was reportedly 1,850 lb.

The calves were displayed at the McNay Research Farm's 50th Anniversary Field Day on September 14, 2006 and were popular with the crowd.

The Ballot of Belladrum calves were thick, medium height calves with good disposition. The Bardolier calves had more frame and slightly less muscling. The 1970/1980s calves were taller with less muscling.

Two bulls, 661 and 667, sons of Ballot of Belladrum, were deemed worthy of semen collection. The bulls are being registered and collected. Semen will be made available for purchase.

Table 1. Progeny of selected historical Angus bulls, 2007.

Bull Name	Birth Date	AAA reg#	Progeny		Avg Prog Wean Ratio	Avg PreWean Wt/day of age	65 bull avg=3.56
			Bulls	Heifers			Bull PostWean ADG
Ballot of Belladrum	12/08/54	2797832	3	1	104	2.95	2.76
Bardolier 532 of Wilton	09/10/57	2590047	2	1	92	2.55	2.85
Schearbrook Shoshone	02/07/71	7011424	1	0	104	2.99	3.63
Pine Drive Big Sky	07/04/80	9894245	1	1	100	2.79	2.78

Table 2. Individual bull calf data from historical Angus bulls, 2007.

Calf no.	Gender	Born	Birth wt.	Sire	Dam	Dam no.	Weight	ADG	ADG
							3/14/07	Dec-Mar	Feb-Mar
661	bull	4/5/06	76	Ballot of Belladrum	ISU Reina Q 0024	13652162	954	3.11	2.94
667	bull	4/6/06	78	Ballot of Belladrum	ISU Reina Q 0216	13627887	910	2.40	2.59
795	bull	4/17/06	95	Ballot of Belladrum	ISU Reina Q 8329	13272054	893	2.76	3.41
755	bull	4/12/06	82	Bardolier 532 of Wilton	ISU Reina R 8013	13630300	875	2.75	3.29
719	bull	4/8/06	90	Schearbrook Shoshone	ISU Reina R 1119	14450614	1,050	3.63	3.53
909	bull	5/5/06	82	Pine Drive Big Sky	ISU Reina R 0095	13652170	793	2.78	3.47
721	bull	4/9/06	81	Pine Drive Big Sky	Blackcap Eileen 454F Lar	12672247	799	2.94	2.82
Average of all 65 bulls born at McNay Farm, Spring 2007							940	3.56	3.57