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## Bull Power - don't strike out

**I**t is the time of year for spring training, where baseball teams will evaluate their bull pens for the coming baseball season. Cow-calf producers should do the same and make sure their bull pen is ready for the upcoming breeding season.

Bulls can live for up to 15 years, but their ability to reliably breed cows begins to decline around 4 or 5 years of age. Older bulls need to be carefully evaluated to make sure they are sound enough to breed cows throughout the breeding season.

To get started, cattle producers should carefully appraise the body condition of the bull at this time. If bulls are thin, do not push them too fast with high concentrate diets since acidosis can lead to abomasal ulcers, liver abscesses or seminal vesiculitis. However, bulls will lose 100-400 pounds during the breeding season so they need to be in good flesh, but not fat, going into the breeding season.

It takes approximately 60 days for a bull to produce sperm. Therefore, we have a limited time to prepare the bull properly before the breeding season begins. Any vaccinations or other procedures that

could affect fertility should be done now to allow for unhindered sperm production.

### Get them in shape

Just like athletes, bulls need to get in shape during spring training before the breeding season begins. Bulls will need to be able to travel in the breeding pasture to find cows in estrus. One of the easiest methods to get bulls some exercise now is to place bulls in a large pasture with water at one end and feed or salt at the other to condition the bulls with walking every day.

To best evaluate the fertility of the bull, a Breeding Soundness Exam should be conducted by a veterinarian. Older bulls will gradually lose fertility and a microscopic exam of the sperm sample is the best way to predict fertility. Younger bulls may have had some testicular damage during the winter such as frost bite and should be evaluated as well.

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## WAKEFIELD FARMS POLLED CHAROLAIS

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### TESTING 6 BULLS FOR TAMA

March and April sons of BHD Reality T3136 P, CJC  
Mr President T122, WF Infinite Mac 015, LT Council  
0150 P and RC Distance 3154 Pld

- Lot 270: BW: 94 • ADG: 3.98 • WDA: 3.50
- Lot 271: BW: 92 • ADG: 3.16 • WDA: 3.09
- Lot 272: BW: 94 • ADG: 3.63 • WDA: 3.10
- Lot 273: BW: 92 • ADG: 3.44 • WDA: 3.12
- Lot 274: BW: 92 • ADG: 2.89 • WDA: 2.83
- Lot 275: BW: 90 • ADG: 4.22 • WDA: 3.59

### TESTING 4 HEIFERS FOR TAMA

Sired by LT Cheyenne Blend 7142 P,  
LT Council 0150 P and BHD Reality T3136 P

- Lot 389: BW: 79 • ADG: 2.78 • WDA: 2.17
- Lot 390: BW: 77 • ADG: 2.59 • WDA: 2.29
- Lot 391: BW: 86 • ADG: 2.92 • WDA: 2.67
- Lot 392: BW: 83 • ADG: 2.03 • WDA: 2.39

Larry, Kyle & Dan Wakefield  
20701 - 150th St. • New Richland, MN 56072  
Ph. (507) 465-3756 • E-mail: wakefieldfarms@myclearwave.net

## Bull Selection Basics aka Be a great matchmaker

Thoughtful bull selection is critical to the long-term success of your cow-calf herd. The bull provides 50% of the genetics to the calf crop, and your last three bulls contribute over 85% of the genetics of your cow herd.

- Determine breed based on herd goals and breed rotation – write down your long-term goals and rotational crossbreeding plan, then look for genetics that make that work best.
- Evaluate the cow herd and compare to benchmarks – The old saying, 'you don't know where you're going if you don't know where you've been,' applies here. Use records or a worksheet to determine the current status of your herd.
- Determine who your customer is – Ultimately, the consumer is the final customer, but who is your direct customer? Which traits will satisfy the next in-line customer?
- Use bull EPDs (Expected Progeny Differences) and visually look at the bull – The meaning of all those EPD abbreviation is usually listed in the sale catalog, along with breed averages. Also consider Index EPDs, which compares bulls using six EPD traits. Then actually look at the bull for soundness, defects and disposition.

With the current cost of keeping cows, and the expected value of calves this year, producers can't afford a breeding season disaster. During the breeding exam, bulls should also be tested for Trichomoniasis. Carrier bulls are non-symptomatic, but can infect 90% of the cows they breed. Infected cows will typically become bred but then the embryo dies and the cow will re-cycle. This sexually transmitted disease has been diagnosed in several Iowa herds over the last year.

There are still plenty of bulls available either at bull sales or by private treaty from some seedstock producers. Carefully evaluate the genetic merit of the new bull to make sure it fits your program.

New bulls should be isolated for at least three weeks before being introduced into the herd. All new bulls should also be tested for Bovine Viral Diarrhea Virus and Johne's disease. Careful planning now will help ensure a successful breeding season this summer – and that's a homerun in anyone's book.

## Fuel, oil spill prevention plan needed by Oct. 1

The Oil Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasure (SPCC) Program will require farmer to have a written spill prevention plan in place by Oct. 1, 2013.

The requirement applies to farms which have more than 1,320 gallons of combined above-ground storage for gasoline, diesel fuel, lube oil, hydraulic oil, adjuvant oil, crop oil, and/or vegetable oil.

The requirement is a result of the 1972 EPA Clean Water Act and 1973 Oil Pollution Prevention Regulation. The goal is to prevent oil spills into waters of the U.S.

While SPCC plans do not need to be submitted to EPA, a hard copy of the plan will need to be readily available if/when an EPA inspection occurs on your farm after Oct. 1.

In determining your farm's storage capacity, you must include empty fuel and/or oil storage tanks, says Justine Stevenson, ICA Director of Government Relations and Public Policy. The only way those empty tanks can be excluded, she says, is if they are "permanently closed," meaning they have no attaching piping or pumping system and there is an attached sign stating they are closed which includes the closure date and farm operators signature.

Stevenson says farmers can "self certify" using an EPA template if they have between 1,320-10,000 gallons of storage capacity, and have never had a spill. That template is available at <http://www.epa.gov/emergencies/content/spcc/tier1temp.htm>.

Farms with greater than 10,000 gallons of storage capacity must have a plan prepared by a professional engineer.

Stevenson has prepared an ICA Fact Sheet on this issue. Contact her at [Justine@iabeef.org](mailto:Justine@iabeef.org) for more information.



Testing at Tama

**3 bulls gaining  
3.71+ lbs. per day!**

**Lot 212:** *March son of Oneills Expedition*  
Dam by Oneills Lady Ann 30  
BD: 3/2/12 • BW: 93 • ADG: 3.98 • WDA: 3.09

**Lot 213:** *March son of Connealy Final Product*  
Dam by Oneills Lady Ann 30  
BD: 3/15/12 • BW: 82 • ADG: 3.71 • WDA: 2.94

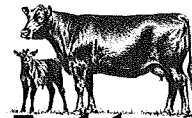
**Lot 214:** *March son of PVF All Payday 729*  
Dam by Deppe Lut Bachel Beauty 902  
BD: 3/25/12 • BW: 75 • ADG: 4.53 • WDA: 3.47

Dennis & Jennifer Deppe  
2004 Casper Ave. • Waverly, IA 50677  
319-352-3259 • 319-239-1824 (c)

Watch for other bull test  
consignments at Iowa  
Angus and Midland Bull  
Test! Tama sale is May 3.

## Wical Angus Alley

Steve & Jan Wical



**Tama on test**

**Lot #264:** *March son of Sydgen Mandate 6079*  
Dam by W A A Black Rose  
BD: 3/1/12 • BW: 74 • **205 WT:** 680  
**Int. Wt:** 945 • **ADG:** 3.83 • **WDA:** 3.17  
**EPD's:** CE +7, WW: 54, YW 103, MM 30

**Lot #265:** *March son of Sitz Upward 307R*  
Dam by W A A Misty  
BD: 3/3/12 • **205 WT:** 693 • **Int. Wt:** 1135  
**BW:** 80 • **ADG:** 5.20 • **WDA:** 3.42  
**EPD's:** CE +4, WW: 55, YW: 105, MM 30

**Lot 265 is 3/4 brother to our \$10,000 bull at the 2012 Tama ICA Sale!**  
Sale is May 3.

24211 Diagonal Rd • Grundy Center, IA 50638  
319-824-3101 or 319-239-4278