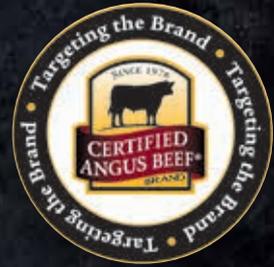




BEYOND THE LOGO



Targeting the Brand helps breeders help their customers.

Story by Miranda Reiman, Certified Angus Beef LLC

Until last year, Earl Wayne Reese had never heard of Davis Angus.

But the Texas cattleman already knew a thing or two about carcass data and feedlot closeouts. He'd retained ownership of his calves through finishing for years. He knew *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) was a legitimate target.

So when the Davis Angus sale book showed up in his mailbox, he noticed the CAB Targeting the Brand™ logo right away.

"There were some particular bloodlines I wanted to use, and they had some really good data on their bulls, so I decided to go up there and see what they looked like," Reese says.

Many animals carried the mark, so he sorted from there.

"I circle the bulls I'm interested in and I only look at those bulls," Reese says.

He came home with six new sires.

"We try to arm people with enough information that they can make a decision on what they need for their cattle and their herd," says Debbie Davis, who ranches with her husband, Jim, and their family near Foss, Okla.

For the past few years, that's meant including the logo on sires that meet the marbling and grid value (\$G) criteria.

"We can say, 'Hey, we've got those cattle that can produce CAB, that can get you a premium.' We're aiming for the white tablecloth crowd," she says.

It's a point of differentiation they're happy to promote, because it's good for them and the greater beef community.

THE MORE THAT MEET THE MARK

Select Sires published the first directory to carry CAB's Targeting the Brand logo, 10 years ago when it was a general use mark. Their innovation was to partner with the brand on a new application, to identify specific animals.

Brian House, Select Sires vice president of beef programs, says anything that can point cattlemen toward quality is a boon for everyone.

"It was a no-brainer for us, because of what we'd already been doing in promoting high-quality Angus genetics," House says, noting the logo has made gains in producer recognition over the years. "Initially, it might not have meant as much, but now people have figured out that they can improve their cattle on the basis of marbling. I think they were almost like, 'I can't do that. My cattle aren't the right kind.'"

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On average, cattlemen are more comfortable making the change today and have more tools available, House says.

“It was sort of thought of as a high-marbling club you had to belong to,” he says. “Guess what? The membership is wide open.”

There has been a steady growth in the number of cattle considered “carcass bulls.” In the Select Sires directory, three-fourths of the bulls will carry the Targeting the Brand mark this year. Don’t mistake that for single-trait selection, House says.

“There aren’t any bulls only there because they’re high marbling,” he says. “There’s a lot of choices.”

QUALITY IN THE MIX

Gordon Stucky, Kingman, Kan., started putting the Targeting the Brand logo in his sale book in 2011 to guide producers who specifically want to improve

their cattle for the next segment.

“We always try to help a customer figure out what they need to address first,” he says. Sometimes it’s growth or maternal, many times it’s marbling.

“We always feel quality grade has to be in the mix,” he says, noting that many of his customers retain ownership through finishing.

When comparing bulls that carry the logo to those that don’t, many said they saw higher prices for those identified.

So is that a premium or a discount system?

“You’ve got to let the chips fall where they may,” Stucky says, most concerned with making sure his customers have all the information they need.

He also prints the logo to support the brand that he’s part owner of, as are all American Angus Association members.

“We need CAB as much as CAB needs us,” he says.

The Logo on Loads

Some — but not all — Angus LinkSM cattle groups carry the Targeting the Brand logo.

What gives?

A group can be marketed with the Targeting the Brand logo when it earns a 125, or greater, grid score and each animal is predominately black-hided. In other words, they need to be Angus type as defined by the American Angus Association’s Government Live Angus (GLA) specification.

“Of the 10 carcass specifications, the top reason cattle fail to make it into CAB is lack of marbling,” says Kara Lee, production brand manager. “The grid value takes that into account, while also including other traits of importance like adequate ribeye and the value of carcass weight.”

Commercial producers who use Targeting the Brand identified bulls should have a greater chance of qualifying their calves through the Angus Link program.



Jim and Debbie Davis, Davis Angus.

The brand helps drive demand on the consumer level, and that eventually makes it all the way back to the breeders.

“We want our customers to be able to sell their steer at a premium,” Davis says.

Using registered Angus bulls, and ones that meet the criteria, is a starting point.

“You can’t just go out there and say, ‘Oh, there’s a black bull so I’m going to produce CAB. This is easy,’” Davis says. “You have to work at it.”

Some day, Davis hopes 100% of their bulls will qualify for the mark.

“Will I ever have it? Probably not, but am I going to work toward that? Absolutely, I am,” she says. And when they make it? “I’ll go celebrate...with a CAB steak.” **AJ**

TARGETING THE BRAND QUALIFICATIONS

“There are probably some people that have the opportunity to label their cattle as Targeting the Brand and they may not even realize it,” says Brian House, Select Sires vice president of beef programs.

Bulls must be above breed average or better for both of these two metrics, as noted based on the spring 2019 sire summary:

Marbling EPD (expected progeny difference) must be at least +0.53 and an Angus Grid Value Index (\$G) of + 34.09 or above.

As breed averages fluctuate, so do those criteria.

“If I can make my cattle worth more from a free program that I qualify for, just because I’ve bred the right kind, then I need to do that,” House says.

Kara Lee, CAB production brand manager, says the



logo communicates a lot of information when used correctly, “but commonly we see it in a general use format and we’re trying to get away from that.”

That means breeders should not use it in an advertisement or on a website without context.

“That could be as simple as saying, ‘Our sale features 52 bulls that qualify for Targeting the Brand,’” for example,” Lee says.

Breeders who use the logo on an animal-by-animal basis in their sale books for the first time are eligible for \$250 credit toward the Black Hide Collection™, to purchase customer gifts or for personal use. Visit www.cabcattle.com/targeting-the-brand/cattle-marketing/seedstock for more information.

	Value
Marbling EPD (Marb)	+ 0.53
Dollar Grid Index (\$G)	+ 34.09

Based on percentiles from Spring 2019.