

ANGUS TRIALS EBVs FOR STRUCTURE

For the first time for a beef breed in Australia, and possibly the world, Angus Australia has produced trial EBVs for structure, initially for five legs and feet traits.

Until now, EBVs have been available for 17 traits covering calving ease, growth and maternal, fertility and carcass.

Angus Australia's breed development and information manager Carel Teseling stressed that these new EBVs have been produced as a trial only but are available on the Angus Australia website for animals that have been assessed by accredited assessors and have structure EBVs with an accuracy of 40% or more.

Forty Angus herds have submitted sufficient data to generate structure EBVs. Structure scoring is accepted only from technicians accredited by the Performance Beef Breeders' Association. At present there are 28 accredited scorers and they can be found on Angus Australia's website.

Data on the six legs and feet traits have been gathered on 9000 Australian Angus bulls and females of 750 days of age or less. It is considered that data from 5000 cattle needs to be collected for further traits to be considered.

The 9000 Angus contributed 37,472 records to the database and just over 75% of these came from bulls.

The five traits are front feet angle, rear feet angle, front feet claw set, rear leg side view and rear leg hind view.

"Mobility is essential in beef animals and this can be compromised if legs and feet are not right," said Mr Teseling.

"If the ability to walk to water and feed in open grazing or to stand in feedlots is impeded, efficiency can be jeopardized affecting profitability.

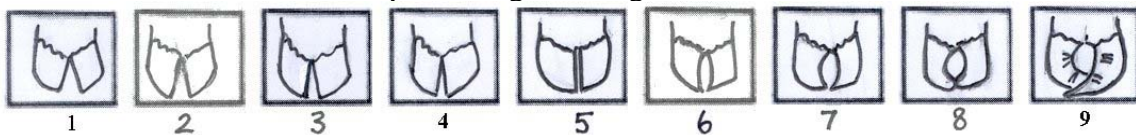
"Poor legs and feet structure can affect a bulls ability to cover cows resulting in lower conception rates," he said.

STRUCTURAL ASSESSMENT – an explanation

The structural assessment system uses a 1-9 scoring system for feet and leg structure:

- ◆ A score of 5 is ideal.
- ◆ 4 and 6 show slight variation from ideal, but this includes most animals. Any animal scoring 4 or 6 would be acceptable in any breeding program.
- ◆ 3 and 7 shows greater variation, but would be acceptable in most commercial breeding programs. However seedstock producers should be wary.
- ◆ 2 and 8 are low scoring animals and should be looked at carefully before purchasing.
- ◆ 1 and 9 should not be catalogued and are considered culls.

Front Feet Claw Set 1 – open divergent; 5 – good; 9 extreme scissor claw



Reference: Shape (primarily curl) and evenness of the claw set.

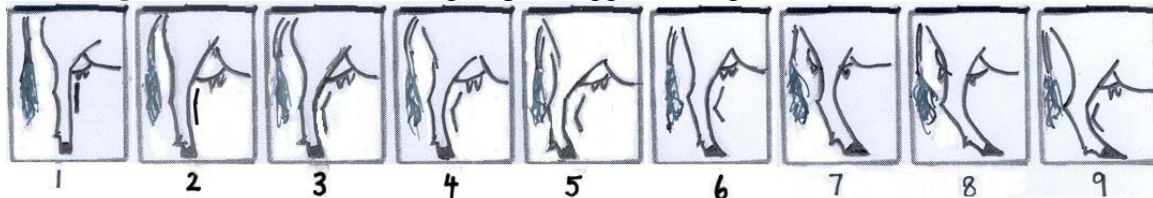
Front Feet Angle 1 – steep (stubbed toe); 5 – good; 9 – shallow heel

Rear Feet Angle 1 – steep (stubbed toe); 5 – good; 9 – shallow heel



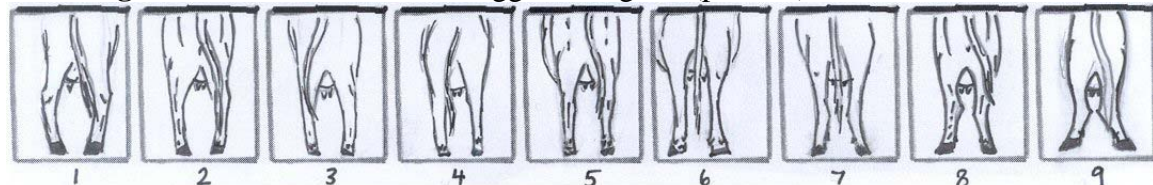
Reference: Strength of pastern, depth of heel and length of foot.

Rear Legs Side View 1 – straight (post legged); 5 – good; 9 – sickle hocked



Reference: Angle measured at the front of the hock.

Rear Leg Hind View 1 – Bow Legged; 5 – good (parallel); 9 – Cow Hocked



Reference: Direction of the feet when viewed from the rear.

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