



**EASTERN PLAINS
ANGUS**

ANNUAL BULL SALE
**WEDNESDAY
5TH AUG 2026**

ANDREW & SALLY WHITE - 0477 359 057

AuctionsPlus
Elders

www.easternplainsangus.com.au easternplains@activ8.net.au "Eastern Plains" Guyra NSW

ANGUS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

ANGUS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
BULL CHECK
CATTLE VET EXAMINERS

Bull Fertility; What's a Fair & Reasonable Ask?

With the Spring Angus Bull Selling Season soon to launch, photos of fat, sappy Angus Bulls with captions like "depth & consistency", "slick coated" & "easy doing" are about to flood social & print media. But amidst the marketing glitz & glamour, be mindful that Fertility is way more important than all of the above put together when it comes to your profit.

Fertility is widely recognised as one of the most important traits driving profit in beef herds. It makes economic sense to give consideration to Fertility traits & have them in the mix of traits you're selecting for when purchasing Angus Bulls.

Whilst Angus is a breed noted for its' Fertility, variation within the breed for this important trait definitely exists. Be aware of this variation & know how to select for it.

When it comes to how bull sale catalogues describe the Fertility of an Angus Bull, we urge buyers to look for *independent, objective information*. Quite simply, if it's lacking it will be almost impossible to reliably & accurately select bulls for this trait.

So what are we talking about when we say "*independent, objective information* describing the Fertility of an Angus Bull"?

Firstly, we're talking about *independent, objective information* describing the Fertility of that Angus Bull himself, ie his own Fertility (& not that of his progeny). A bulls own Fertility & reproductive soundness will have a very significant impact on his fundamental job in your herd; getting females in calf earlier in the breeding season. Be mindful the presentation of a bull on sale day & his genotype have no relationship at all to this.

BULLCHECK™ is the 'gold card' & most reliable means by which to objectively & accurately assess Fertility in a bull. It is a standardised descriptor of bull Fertility & reproductive soundness. Endorsed & developed for this specific purpose by Australian Cattle Veterinarians (ACV). Even though you're paying a price premium when purchasing bulls out of a sale ring, without a pre-sale BULLCHECK™ test you'll be assuming the lion's share of the risk of buying an infertile or sub-fertile bull.

BULLCHECK™ includes:-

Physical Check - Internal sex gland palpation via rectal entry to check for irregularities which can indicate infections. Penis & sheath are examined for infections, warts or injury & to check the penis can be extruded. Legs, feet, joints, back & gait are assessed for soundness, noting, for example, the presence of post hind legs, swollen or sickle hocks, claw set.

Scrotal Palpation & Measurement - Scrotal circumference is measured + testicles are assessed to identify if injuries or abnormalities are present.

Sperm Motility - Often referred to as a 'crush side' semen test. A drop of semen is placed on a microscope slide & examined 'crush side' to assess the percentage of live sperm cells moving forward. Sperm cells must be motile to achieve conception. ACV guidelines for Sperm Motility recommend a minimum of >30% progressively motile sperm. Though we adhere to a higher standard, cataloguing only those bulls who test >50%.

Sperm Morphology - CANNOT be tested 'crush side'! A specialised laboratory microscope is used to examine a preserved semen sample, assessing the integrity of the sperm head, mid-piece & tail. Results detail the percentage of normal & abnormal sperm cells in a semen sample. ACV guidelines for Sperm Morphology recommend >50% normal sperm for bulls used in multiple sire matings & >70% normal sperm for bulls used in single sire matings or AI.

Why would you care about Sperm Morphology?

Sperm Morphology is a heritable trait, genetically related to the interval from calving to first oestrus cycle in females. Australian research has consistently shown Sperm Morphology to be positively associated with either pregnancy rate or calf output in beef breeding bulls. Bulls who repeatedly fail minimum thresholds are at best sub-fertile & at worst infertile.

Though sub-fertile bulls may still sire calves, they'll likely be costly, late calves because their sub-fertility can produce a non-viable embryo so the female fails to conceive on that cycle. Not her fault, but this forces her into the next joining cycle. It is difficult for her to then break out of this late calving cycle, increasing her chances of PTE in a subsequent joining. If you're multiple-sire joining, it can be almost impossible to identify sub-fertile bulls as others in the joining team may cover for them. This exposes those fertile bulls to a greater risk of injury & thus more cost to you.

The failure of a bull to test to minimum Sperm Morphology thresholds can often be transient in nature, arising from some form of stressor like nutrition, parasitism, injury, disease, husbandry etc. Once recovered, the bull will likely test compliant to minimum thresholds. But until such time, his Fertility status can be viewed as sub-fertile. For all the reasons discussed above, he should not enter a bull sale ring in this state!

Bear in mind too, the failure of a bull to meet minimum Sperm Morphology thresholds may not be transient, but due to some inherent, persistent or permanent Fertility issue. Repeatedly failing pre-sale testing can be evidence of this. Whilst the diagnostic cost of determining the exact issue is often prohibitive, Sperm Morphology testing can at least identify its' presence if not its' exact nature. Again, this bull does not belong in a bull sale ring in this state (most likely never!).

It is important to note that BULLCHECK™ is NOT a guarantee of bull Fertility. This is because bull Fertility is never a constant. It varies over time in response to a multitude of stressors over which you may have limited control. Nevertheless, a pre-sale BULLCHECK™ test is your best option to minimise your risk of buying sub-fertile or infertile bulls out of a sale ring. It substantiates a bull has a high probability of being fertile & is fit for breeding purposes prior to him entering a sale ring.

A fair & reasonable ask, don't you agree?

Secondly, we're talking about *independent, objective information* describing the genetic merit of an Angus Bull for Fertility or his 'potential' to pass his Fertility onto his progeny. If you're retaining daughters, the bulls you purchase will impact on the reproductive performance & profitability of your breeder herd for the next 10-15 years. So there is a lot at stake when it comes to the genetic merit of a bull for Fertility.

Unequivocally, to reliably select for genetic merit for Fertility, or the 'potential' of an Angus Bull to pass this trait onto his progeny, we urge buyers to refer to TACE EBV's (formerly Angus Breedplan). Specifically those describing Fertility:-

Scrotal Size (SS):- Estimates of genetic differences between animals in scrotal circumference (cm) at 400 days of age. A larger SS EBV is more favourable. It is associated with earlier age at puberty in bull and heifer progeny (on average). As well, bulls with larger SS EBV's are expected (on average) to breed daughters with shorter days to calving – see below.

Days to Calving (DC):- Estimates of genetic differences between animals in female Fertility, expressed as the number of days from the start of the joining period to calving date. A lower, more negative DC EBV is more favourable. Differences in DC are largely due to the variation in conception dates amongst females following the start of the joining/mating period. Some females conceive earlier, some later after bulls have been introduced to a breeding herd.

Days to Calving (DC) cont.

Bulls with lower DC EBV's indicate they will produce daughters with shorter number of days to calving. These daughters will likely conceive earlier in the joining period so it's probable they'll calve earlier than their contemporaries. This gives them a better chance to return to oestrus sooner following calving, setting them up for their next joining, & to produce a calf every year. They tend too, to be those who show early puberty as heifers.

Though there is a small favourable relationship between SS & DC, Australian research has shown directly selecting for DC (rather than SS alone) will help you to significantly improve female Fertility in your herd. Importantly, this will help improve your profit!

Lastly, we're proud to be an Angus seedstock producer who, for many years, has provided buyers with "independent, objective information" about the Fertility & reproductive soundness of our Bull Sale Team. Our Bull Sale Catalogue provides a summary of BULLCHECK™ results + both Fertility EBV's in the Lot Details for each bull, as shown in the image below (NB – image from our 2023 Eastern Plains Angus Bull Sale Catalogue).

Used as a yearling over Commercial Cows in our Spring 2022 joining program & will have progeny on the ground by sale day. Positive for fat with good genetic merit for both fertility traits; Days to Calving & Scrotal Size. Very strong genetic merit for all structural traits; Claw Set, Foot Angle & Leg Angle.

Sperm Morphology: 88.0%

Purchaser..... \$

LOT 6 **EASTERN PLAINS SARONA S129^{SV} (AI)** **HBR**

BORN: 29/07/2021 **IDENT:** NEP21S129 **GENETIC STATUS:** AMFU,CAFU,DDFU,NHFU
 H.P.C.A INTENSITY™ ARDROSSAN EQUATOR A241™
SIRE: RENNYLEA L519™ NORL519 **DAM:** EASTERN PLAINS LACEY G20™ NEPC20
 RENNYLEA H414™ EASTERN PLAINS LACEY A41™

Mid June 2023 Angus Australia Trans-Tasman Angus Cattle Evaluation (TACE)


TACE	CALVING EASE				GROWTH & MATERNAL				FERTILITY		CARCASE						STRUCTURE					
	CED	CEM	GL	BW	200	400	600	MCW	Milk	Scrot	DC	CWT	EMA	RIB	RUMP	RBY%	IMF%	NFI-F	DOC	ANG	CLAW	LEG
EBV	5.8	4.5	-6.8	4.4	55	103	139	130	17	2.9	-6.5	84	7.8	-0.6	-1.5	0.8	2.7	0.63	26	0.66	0.36	0.86
ACC	64%	57%	84%	76%	73%	74%	77%	72%	66%	76%	51%	67%	62%	64%	64%	61%	63%	54%	62%	68%	68%	64%

SELECTION INDEX VALUES				BEEFCLASS STRUCTURAL ASSESSMENT SCORES								
Ang Breed	Domestic	Hvy Grain	Hvy Grass	F Claw Set	R Claw Set	F Ang	R Ang	R Leg Side	R Leg Hind	Mus Score	Temp	Sheath
\$239	\$199	\$301	\$228	5	5	5	6	5	5	C+	2	5

Traits observed: GL,BWT,200WT,400WT,600WT,SC,Scan(EMA,Rib,IMF),DOC,Structure(Claw Set x 1, Foot Angle x 1)

Used as a yearling over Commercial Cows in our Spring 2022 joining program & will have progeny on the ground by sale day. Very strong genetic merit across a range of traits; Calving Ease, Growth, Fertility, Docility, Carcase & Structure. A very sound bull himself with outstanding genetic merit for all structural traits; Claw Set, Foot Angle & Leg Angle. A very strong indexing bull across all indexes.

Purchaser..... \$



Scrotal Circumference: 39.0
Sperm Motility: 84.0%
Sperm Morphology: 91.0%

22 EASTERN PLAINS ANGUS

If you've made it this far, thanks for sticking with this discussion! Fertility is a complex issue about which R&D is ongoing, but we hope you found the above useful & informative.

If you'd like to share feedback don't hesitate to contact us:- easternplains@activ8.net.au or mobile 0409 455 232 (Sally).