

The mathematics of bull selection worth closer study

By Lorenzo Lasater, President

As breeding season approaches for many U.S. ranches, I often hear conversations about how much we should pay for a bull, and the budget range that folks feel comfortable spending varies quite a bit. Obviously, open cows are highly detrimental to the bottom line, but beyond just freshening cows, a quality bull also delivers a great deal of hidden value to the operation.

The old rule of thumb is that a bull is worth four or five times the value of a weaned calf. Let's look at that math based on the market today:

600-pound feeder calves at Producers Auction in San Angelo on 3/9/2022 averaged \$1.81 a pound, or \$1086. If we factor a bull's value at four steers, we could pay \$4344. If we choose to view him as being worth five steers, we could pay \$5430. This method appears to reasonably approximate a bull's value. Each ranch must examine their own budget and genetic needs and find a value that feels comfortable.

We can conservatively project a bull to produce 125 calves in his lifetime, breeding 25 females a year over five years. Obviously, this can be leveraged higher with



The ripples of a bull's impact on the herd, whether good or bad, will continue for almost 20 years.

multiple breeding seasons and greater breeding ratios. But you can see very quickly that if he improves key traits in your herd, he will add significant value through these changes.

For example, consider a bull's impact on weaning weight. The Beefmaster average WW EPD is 25. If you were to invest in a bull with a WW EPD of 40, you could expect to receive an additional 15 pounds over those 125 calves, yielding an additional 1875 pounds at weaning. At today's price of \$1.81, that translates to \$3393 in additional revenue as compared with breed-average bulls. We can apply this simple analysis to the EPDs for many other critical traits, such as calving ease, carcass merit, longevity, etc. It becomes readily apparent that not all bulls are created equal.

We used a 600-pound weaning weight in the value analysis above. But if your calves weigh less than 600 at weaning, maybe you should look at the breed or the breeding establishment. Are they genetically able to provide that type of production efficiency? Does the breeding program place enough emphasis on growth?

A bull also impacts a herd more subtly through traits such as disposition. Disposition is partly inherited (and

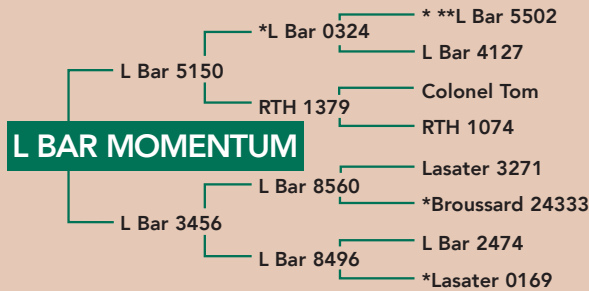
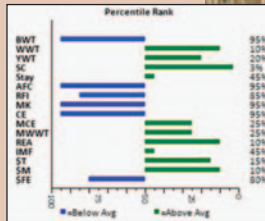
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PERFORMANCE BEEFMASTER GENETICS

Call for pricing

See website for additional sires available. Quantity limited on some sires. AI certificates \$10. Freight additional.

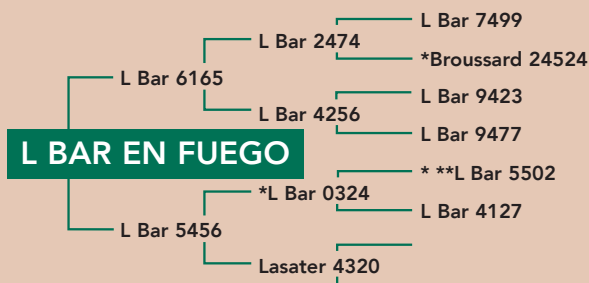
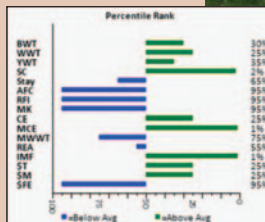
Blending the great L Bar 5502 line with Lasater and Rancho Tres Hijos genetics, **L Bar Momentum** provides the perfect complementary cross for En Fuego genetics. He really rang the bell in our 2019 Performance Test and Sale: He was the second highest-selling bull overall, gained an amazing five pounds per day on the feed test and had one of the highest carcass scans in the offering. Momentum's EPDs are incredibly balanced—he's in the top 25% of the breed in nine categories.



DNA #123015084092 PV	Classified U1/2					Reg. # C1095158									
EPD	CE	BW	VW	YW	MILK	MCE	SC	STAY	AFC	RFI	REA	MARB	\$T	\$M	\$FE
Momentum1.1	1.7	40	58	6.2	3.6	1.4	-0.1	.2	.17	.63	.02	\$102	\$26	\$10	

Owned in partnership with HH Holmes Ranch

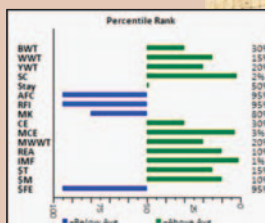
One of our best herd sires to come through in many years! **L Bar En Fuego** sired the high-selling bull in the Isa Bull Sale the last *three* years, including L Bar 4519 and L Bar Habanero. En Fuego is polled and has the ideal conformation, with a U 1/1 classification. A breed trait leader for SC, MCE and MARB, En Fuego produces wonderful females, like the two daughters featured in our donor section. He is straight-topped, perfectly muscled and clean underneath—he's got the look!



DNA #549728A PV	Classified U1/1					Reg. # C988569									
EPD	CE	BW	VW	YW	MILK	MCE	SC	STAY	AFC	RFI	REA	MARB	\$T	\$M	\$FE
En Fuego 4.6	-3	34	51	1.7	4.9	1.5	-1.7	1.3	.36	.22	.45	\$93	\$21	\$5	

Owned by Willie Earl Washington

The high-selling bull in our 2016 sale, **L Bar 4519** has incredibly powerful and balanced EPDs, ranking in the top 15% of the breed in seven categories. He blends the En Fuego and Essential bloodlines, two of our top maternal sires ever. In the 2016 Performance Test, he was outstanding in every category, including one of the best carcass sonograms in the sale! He is moderate in size, powerful and very correct. We are very excited about the future of L Bar 4519!



DNA #9161327045 PV	Classified U1/1					Reg. # C1050589									
EPD	CE	BW	VW	YW	MILK	MCE	SC	STAY	AFC	RFI	REA	MARB	\$T	\$M	\$FE
4519 4.3	-4	39	59	7.7	4.3	1.5	-5	1.7	.40	.74	.49	\$108	\$20	\$7	

Owned by Dalton Lowery

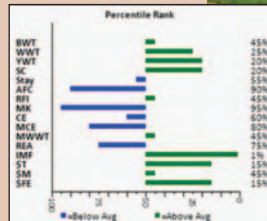
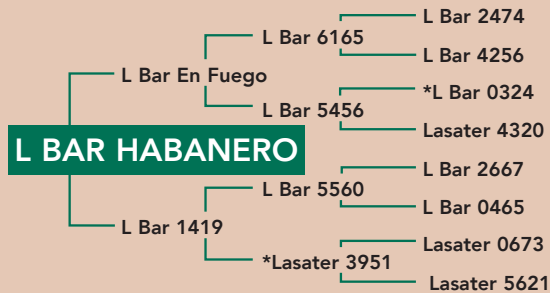
* Pacesetter **Typesetter

PERFORMANCE BEEFMASTER GENETICS

Call for pricing

See website for additional sires available. Quantity limited on some sires. AI certificates \$10. Freight additional.

Put some *heat* in your program with **L Bar Habanero**. This polled En Fuego son has been a top performer in every phase of his development, including earning one of the highest scores in both grass gains and marbling (IMF) in the Isa Performance Test. L Bar Habanero has excellent EPDs—ranking in the top 25% of the breed in six EPDs—and a perfect disposition. In the Maternal, Terminal and Feed Efficiency Profit indices, you'll see Habanero provides a huge boost!

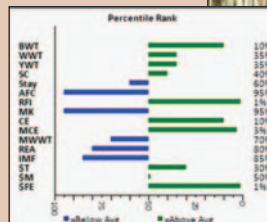
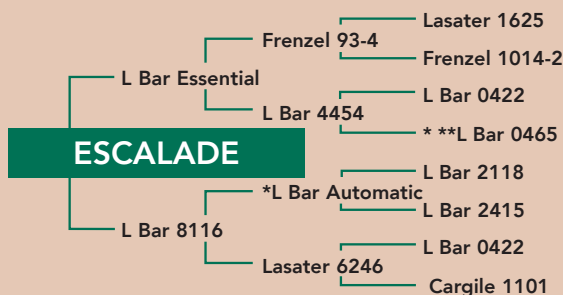


L BAR HABANERO

DNA #6315055299 PV						Classified U1/1					Reg. # C1038019				
EPD	CE	BW	WW	YW	MILK	MCE	SC	STAY	AFC	RFI	REA	MARB	\$T	\$M	\$FE
Habanero 3.1	.2	33	59	6.5	2.7	.9	-.7	.1	.01	.00	.45	\$108	\$16	\$21	

Owned in partnership with Dwight Bertrand

If you are looking to scale new heights in performance, **Escalade** (2401) is your bull. He is the son of the great L Bar Essential and out of an L Bar Automatic Pacesetter daughter. Our top calving-ease sire, Escalade is top 10% for Calving Ease and Birthweight EPDs, and his other EPDs are stellar, including being a leader in RFI and the new \$FE. Escalade is moderately framed and super clean with a straight top. On top of all that, he'll eat out of your hand.



ESCALADE

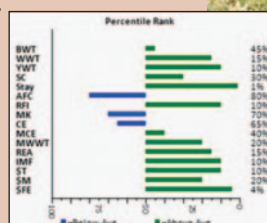
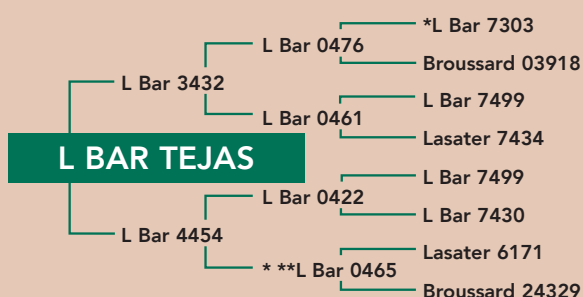
DNA #713403A PV						Classified U1/2						Reg. # C1028230			
EPD	CE	BW	WW	YW	MILK	MCE	SC	STAY	AFC	RFI	REA	MARB	\$T	\$M	\$FE
Escalade	6.0	-1.7	29	51	4.7	4.4	.5	-1.3	.9	-.5	.02	-.11	\$88	\$15	\$30

Owned by Willie Earl Washington

Tejas means Texas in Spanish, and Isa Beefmasters' first E.U.-qualified herd sire does justice to our home state. **L Bar Tejas** was sired by L Bar 3432, one of Isa's great carcass sires, and out of one of our most productive donor females. On both top and bottom, he goes back to the great L Bar 7499, our best maternal line. A trait leader for Stayability and \$FE, L Bar Tejas blends growth, maternal and carcass traits. He is well-muscled with a straight top and perfect underline.



E.U.-Qualified



L BAR TEJAS

DNA #3116087889 PV													Reg. # C1082471		
EPD	CE	BW	WW	YW	MILK	MCE	SC	STAY	AFC	RFI	REA	MARB	\$T	\$M	\$FE
Tejas	2.9	.2	39	65	8.5	3.2	.7	6.0	-.3	-.17	.54	.21	\$115	\$22	\$25

Owned in partnership with Doyle Sanders

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**THE ISA INDEX
(AND CONSTANT INNOVATION)**

The mathematics of bulls

Continued on front cover

partly learned), so he will pass that bad attitude to his sons and daughters. If a bull is difficult to handle or even dangerous, what is the cost? Disposition is one of our foundational principles embodied in the *Six Essentials*. Our family has been selecting for it since 1937, which has resulted in gentle and responsive cattle.

Bulls also deliver a great deal of hidden value if your operation keeps replacement females. Bulls that sire daughters that can breed early and remain in the herd a long time are extremely valuable. We see a lot of customers who are looking to Beefmasters for the first time because they are frustrated that the females out of their previous breed of bulls don't last long enough or have too many health problems that knock them out of production. They were promised a premium—and probably paid a lot for the bulls—but inherited expensive repercussions on the production side.

The chart below shows how long a bull's contribution carries on after purchase. It is amazing that the bull you buy this year will still be having a

genetic impact on your herd through his daughters 16 years later!

Often breeding establishments don't emphasize the early fertility trait. Many outfits choose to breed heifers at a later age. There are several reasons to do this out of expedience, but is it the right decision genetically? Isa Beefmasters breeds at 14 months to calve at 24 months in a 60-day breeding season. This program can be costly in terms of losses due to open females, but with each generation we are moving the needle forward for early maturity and fertility, keeping only the best genetics in our herd.

A good bull can make a critical contribution to profitability, and his impact lasts significantly longer than we might think. Clearly, bulls are a significant expense, but we also receive a lot of downstream value out of the right one. Each operation must identify a price they can live with and a breeding establishment that provides the right genetics to help them achieve their goals. Just keep in mind that not all bulls—or breeds—are equal when it comes to the grass-based production of beef calves.



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Timeline of bulls' impact on herd

