



AGRICULTURAL NEWSLETTER

Spring 2023 - What's a Good Bull Worth?

Mark Z. Johnson, Oklahoma State University Extension Beef Cattle Breeding Specialist

This week we revisit this age-old question based on the February 21, 2023 USDA Market Report. The question has been asked forever, or at least as long as we have been breeding cattle with a notion of trying to make the next generation better. It is a classic and timeless question. It is an important question. At this time of year, when many bulls are being marketed and we are planning ahead for spring breeding season, it is the question that is asked a lot!

The Answer

I remember first hearing the answer nearly 40 years ago as a student at OSU. "A good bull is worth the value of five calves he sires." I've heard that answer again many times over the years. I believe it is a good answer and a good rule of thumb to follow, the problem is it doesn't exactly narrow down the range. If we do a little "cowboy math", this answer may in fact lead to more questions. Such as

When are we marketing our Calves? What is their Value?

According to the most recent USDA Cattle Market Report from Oklahoma National Stockyards:

523 lb. weaned steer calves (Large, 1) are worth about \$2.31/lb. for a value of \$1,208 per head. Therefore, if my future marketing plan is to sell weaned steers, $1,208 \times 5 = \$6,040$ is the answer.

874 lb. yearling steers (Large, 1) are worth about \$1.78/lb. for a value of \$1,555 per head. Therefore, if my future marketing plan is to sell yearling steers, $1,555 \times 5 = \$7,775$ is the answer.

1,400 lb. finished beef steers are worth \$164.50/cwt live for a value of \$2,303 each. Therefore, if my future marketing plan is to retain ownership through finishing and sell fed cattle on a carcass value basis, $2,303 \times 5 = \$11,515$ is the answer.

So, in the current market, a good bull is worth somewhere between \$6,040 - \$11,515 to a commercial cattle operation. Where exactly in that range depends on your marketing plan and the market conditions at that time. Not an exact number because there are "many layers to this onion." One key point illustrated here is that the longer you will own the offspring before marketing, the greater the value of the bull to your operation. Retained ownership gives you more time and opportunity to capture the value of your investment in genetics. And we haven't even considered the value added to replacement females if we select daughters as our next generation of cows.

I encourage cow-calf operations to consider their production system and marketing plan. Doing so dictates where to apply selection pressure. Genetics pay when you purchase a bull capable of improving genetic potential for the specific traits that will translate to added value at your intended marketing endpoint.

Keep the following chart in mind as another way to evaluate ownership cost of bulls on a per cow or annual basis.

Bull Purchase Price:	\$3,000	\$6,000	\$9,000	\$12,000
	\$19.10	\$38.21	\$57.32	\$76.43
<i>Cost/cow bred - assuming 157 cows bred between ages 1 to 6 (over six breeding seasons)</i>	\$500	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2,000
<i>Cost/year - assuming 6 years of service</i>				

Dr. Mark Johnson discussed the value of a good bull from SunUpTV on February 28, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8js9xPgmj0>

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Spring Forage Clinic

Hosted by Dewey County OSU Extension

Tuesday, March 28th 11-1:30 @

Dewey County Fairgrounds in Taloga, OK

Targeted Fertility for Bermuda to Improve Quality – Dr. Brian Arnall

Weed Control to Optimize Grass Production – Josh Bushong

Summer Annuals for Forage: How to Use Despite the Risk – Dana Zook

Nitrate & Prussic Acid Q & A

Native Grass Recovery through Drought & Grazing – Dr. Laura Goodman

Alternative Crop Blends for Haying & Grazing – Johnston Seed Company



Lunch Sponsored by
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RSVP by Friday March 24th for Lunch to
Dewey County Extension @ (580) 328-5351



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Estimating Wheat Yield

Wheat producers want to know as early as possible what their crop yield will be, especially when the yield potential is poor. Wheat yield may be a concern due to poor plant stands, drought, flooding, late freeze, or an opportunity to plant an alternative crops with increased economic potential.

To estimate yield, there must be an understanding of the difference in crop yield and yield potential. Yield potential is defined as the yield of a crop under ideal conditions. In this context, yield potential is the yield at the time of the estimation assuming favorable conditions after the evaluation takes place. Crop yield, however, is the harvested or final yield produced at the end of the growing season.

Table 1. *Estimated wheat yield for western, central, and eastern Kansas before heading.*

Stems per foot	Row spacing (inches) for western, central, and eastern Kansas								
	Western Kansas			Central Kansas			Eastern Kansas		
	8	10	12	6	7.5	10	6	7.5	10
	Bushels per acre								
5	14	11	9	20	16	12	33	26	20
10	17	14	11	25	20	15	37	30	22
15	20	16	14	30	24	18	42	33	25
20	24	19	16	34	27	21	46	37	28
25	27	21	18	39	31	23	50	40	30
30	30	24	20	44	35	26	55	44	33
35	33	27	22	48	39	29	59	47	35
40	37	29	24	53	42	32	64	51	38
45	40	32	27	58	46	35	68	54	41
50	43	35	29	62	50	37	72	58	43
55	46	37	31	67	54	40	77	61	46
60	50	40	33	72	57	43	81	65	49
65	53	42	35	77	61	46	85	68	51
70	56	45	38	81	65	49	90	72	54
75	60	48	40	86	69	52	94	75	57
80	63	50	42	91	73	54	99	79	59

GARDEN TIPS FOR MARCH

David Hillock, Associate Extension Specialist

Lawn and Turf

- Remove excessive thatch from warm-season lawns. Dethatching, if necessary, should precede crabgrass control treatment. (HLA-6604)
- Broadleaf weeds can easily be controlled in cool-season lawns at this time with post-emergent broadleaf herbicides. (HLA-6421)
- Preemergent crabgrass control chemicals can still be applied to cool- and warm-season turfgrasses (HLA-6421). Heed label cautions when using any weed killers near or in the root zone of desirable plantings.
- March is the second-best time of the year to seed cool-season turfgrass; however, fall is the best time to plant. (HLA-6419)
- Cool-season lawns such as bluegrass, fescue, and ryegrass may be fertilized now with the first application of the season. Usually, four applications of fertilizer are required per year, in March, May, October, and November. (HLA-6420)
- Begin mowing cool-season grasses at 1 ½ to 3 ½ inches high. (HLA-6420)

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