

Why Are We Here?

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We are here because "the truth is more important than the trend. "

There has been an obvious trend for some years. It started when we realize cattle were too small. At that time it was very appropriate to select bigger cattle. The trend has continued unabated, often involving single trait selection-for frame size. Many other functional traits have received minimal attention or have been ignored.

Frame size has been a trait of great economic importance, since there has been a big demand for extremely large frame size, particularly for showring purposes. But how about the industry? How about the other traits? How much muscling and condition will be appropriate for "specification beef" and its production? How about milk production? How about structural soundness?

It is not unusual for beef cattle selection trends to go too far. In fact, they usually do. Why? Perhaps it is because we don't indulge in enough dialogue. Judges, producers, industry people and exhibitors are intelligent, reasonable folks. But after a trend starts rolling, it seems difficult for individuals acting alone to slow its momentum.

In this day of much information and rapid communication, it should be much easier to arrive at valid rationale as a basis for consensus about "the right kind" for the industry than in the past. We have never had so many tools, and we ain't seen nuthin' yet. The next decade or two will provide a vast array of new tools, as a result of the biotechnology revolution. We'll be able to "tailor make" cattle, but we must know the "right kind" to engineer. We no longer need to guess and speculate, and we cannot afford to.

If we look at the factors and study industry needs, and dialogue about these things, today and in the future, we should be able to develop a meaningful blueprint for the right kind.

That's why we are here!