A Guide to Buying Bred Heifers*

Producer and Arrangements
1. Written contract
2. Buyer historic information - website, references
3. Video to evaluate disposition and phenotype if not viewing in person
4. Length of time seller in the heifer development business
5. Buy-back opportunities - pricing terms

Health History and Program
6. Veterinarian reference
7. Vaccination history with specific products and timing
8. Calf hood vaccinated for Brucellosis
9. BVD-PI negative
10. Pre-breeding information - pelvic measurements
11. Herd Trich prevention program
12. Pregnancy guarantee
13. Specific bull information (epd’s), not just “calving ease bulls”

Heifer and Breeding System Description
14. Were they bred in their first breeding season (are they rebreeds?)
15. Available information on source cowherd for each heifer.
16. Primary and secondary ID provided
17. Source and age information if available
18. Polled or dehorned
19. Length of time with bull (not just when they are calving)
20. Projected calving dates provided on each heifer
21. Guaranteed calving “window”
22. Date bulls in and date bulls taken out (in addition to projected calving dates (season)
23. Specific sire provided if AI pregnancy, single or multi-sire bull information provided for natural pregnancies.
22. Where developed – fence integrity, likelihood of biosecurity breach or mis mating

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A Few Economic Considerations for Purchasing Replacement Heifers

1. Buying bred heifers is a long-term investment. Think at least seven years.

2. Avoid buying culled bred females calving out of optimal calving season because they cost less.

3. AI bred heifers are more valuable as calving ease has higher accuracy, potential for a shorter breeding season and superior genetics.

4. Don’t fight the market. Buy the breed that will fit the weaned calf market demand.

5. Direct purchase is often optimal. Specialized auction replacement females can be a good source if they have rigorous standards for seller participation.

6. Think of buying replacement females like buying herd bulls. The economics favors purchase over raising them.

7. Agriculture lenders will finance replacement heifers helping address cash flow issues.

8. There is a bred heifer seasonal price. Buying early can be favorable and offers opportunity for more selection.

9. Be open to buying pairs or pairs bred back (3 in one) as they are often undervalued relative to bred heifers.

Software source to record and manage data: www.cattlemax.com