Commercial Bred Heifer Buyer’s Guide

Seller Reputation and Contractual Agreement
1) Written contract
2) Seller historic information
   • References
   • Length of time seller in the heifer development business
   • Website
   • Other information sources
3) Heifer Source
   • Raised, direct from ranch, sale barn
   • Number and names of prior owners
   • Other source information
4) View cattle in person (particularly on the first transaction)
   Alternately, video(s) to evaluate disposition and phenotype
5) Discuss offspring buy-back opportunities and pricing terms

Health Program and History
1) Veterinarian reference
2) Vaccination history with specific products and timing
3) Calfhood vaccinated for Brucellosis (2nd ID and Standard of Care)
4) BVD-PI negative
5) Pre-breeding information - pelvic measurements
6) Pregnancy guarantee
7) Breeding Information – Synchronization, AI program, Bull exposure times
8) Specific bull information (registration #’s, papers, epd’s)
   • Not just “calving ease bulls”
9) Herd Trich prevention program
   • Fence integrity and biosecurity documentation
10) Where developed
11) Likelihood of biosecurity breach or mismating

Heifer Description
1) Primary and secondary ID provided
2) Source and age information if available
3) Available information on source cowherd for each heifer
4) Polled, or dehorned?

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Breeding Information

1) Were they bred in their first breeding season (are they rebreeds)?
   - Beware of fall bred heifers from the North.
2) Length of time with bull (not just when they are calving)
3) Projected calving dates provided on each heifer
4) Guaranteed calving “window”
5) Date bulls in and date bulls taken out (in addition to projected calving dates)
6) Specific sire provided if AI pregnancy.
7) Single or multi-sire bull information provided for natural pregnancies.

Some Economic Considerations for Purchasing Bred 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 generally more valuable.
   - Higher accuracy EPD’s (e.g., CED)
   - Synchronization creates shorter breeding/calving season
   - 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 (3in one) as they are often undervalued relative to bred heifers.