



# RIPPE GELBVIEH



## *TAKING PRIDE IN OUR CUSTOMER'S SUCCESS*

A Publication of Rippe Gelbvieh

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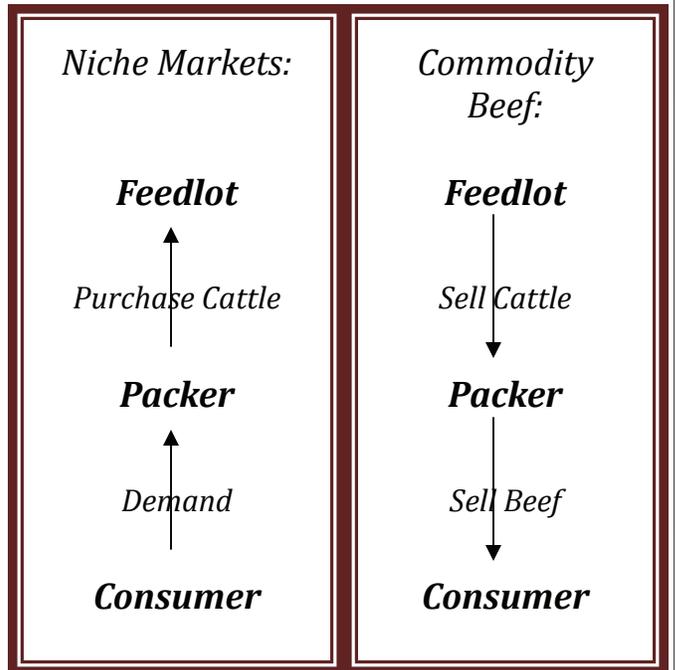
### ***Crossbred cattle are even more critical in Niche Markets compared to straight British.***

The beef industry is evolving, or in my opinion has evolved, right before our eyes. According to Case Gabel with Cattle-Fax, 50% of fed cattle are marketed into niche market or branded programs. Why does this matter? The flow of cattle through the industry has now changed. To the right, I depicted a real basic manner on how I see the industry playing out today.

Today's consumers are demanding information and are willing to pay extra for this information; how much depends on the consumer. Compared to 10 years ago the beef industry is doing a greatly improved job of marketing our product, however, there are challenges that come with this additional marketing. The niche programs can't push product through the system like commodity beef. You have to ask yourself, would it be a premium product if you have twice as much as you can sell? Of course not! In niche programs, the consumer tells the packer how much demand they have for a certain product. Then the packer purchases this many cattle. However, in many niche programs the cattle must be purchased 6 months or further out; here in lies the problem. Niche programs are either short or long on cattle, few are in between. They are either optimistic or pessimistic. Therefore, cattle are not always harvested at their physiological endpoint, contrary to many research studies available in my experience.

Each niche program has their own criteria for which cattle will best fit their marketing goals. These differing standards vary greatly. However, one fact holds across the board; there is an optimum time to market every set

of cattle for every grid. With the use of new technology we are getting better at pinpointing the time to market and project demand for that time. I work for a niche program and we prefer cattle that grade choice and prime and they must be at least 50% Angus or Red Angus by genetics. Despite only having a requirement for 50% British blood, we harvest a lot of straight bred Angus cattle. We have found ways to make straight bred cattle grow and get big enough at the feed yard level. However, problems occur if you're forced to feed a straight bred Angus animal two weeks beyond their optimal harvest date. In that short of time, Yield Grade (YG) 4's and 5's increase by 40% or more. When a YG 4 discount is in the \$14 dollar/cwt range, the cost adds up in a hurry, to the tune of \$100 dollars per head. In contrast when you feed a crossbred animal two weeks too long you do not suffer near that percentage of YG discounts. I know people will boast of their straight bred Angus cattle grading 90% choice with 10% 4's and 5's. It can happen when marketed at the right time. The truth is this is the exception, not the rule. Crossbred cattle have a wider window in which you can market them once they reached their physiological endpoint. Breeders need to and are starting to realize this. It has become especially evident in the latest downturn in the economy. Does your crossbreeding program have this flexibility?



## ***Rippe Gelbvieh Bull Sale: March 14, 2009***

Hello Everyone, I am really excited about the upcoming Rippe Gelbvieh Bull Sale. If you would like to receive our catalog and have typically not received one please give me a call or email me. I hope you find some valuable insight in this newsletter. If you have any questions about the newsletter, or have some special request for other information, feel free to give me a call anytime at (316) 323-4874 or [rippe02@yahoo.com](mailto:rippe02@yahoo.com).

Sincerely,  
Dustin Rippe

## Is your breeding program staying out of the ditch?

Rippe Gelbvieh has determined that it is *okay* to be *average* in your genetic selection when it comes to your breeding program. There are numerous specialized programs to which you can attempt to fit your genetics, but at the end of the day having a cowherd and calf crop that is well-balanced in all traits receives the highest payoff. A “middle of the road” concept in your breeding program is the optimal way to find the equilibrium between minimizing costs and maximizing profits. One item separating Rippe Gelbvieh from the majority of seed stock producers is that we have a pre-planned breeding program and are continually testing our genetics in real-world situations backed with factual and honest data. I would like to go over some traits of emphasis in our breeding program and give you examples of what direction we are taking and how we are measuring each specific attribute.

**BW:** *Goal:* 75 to 80 lbs

*Reasoning:* A live calf is worth more than a dead calf but at the same time BW and growth are strongly correlated, therefore neither extreme would fit what we are trying to accomplish.

*Measuring Stick:* We select bulls to have a BW EPD between -2 and 2. Then, we weigh every calf at birth to determine if changes need to be made in our breeding program before EPDs are updated.

**WW:** *Goal:* 550 to 700 lb adj. 205 day weaning weight

*Reasoning:* There are many outside factors that affect WW. Building a cow herd that is large framed and high in milk production will produce greater WWs but not economical, as feed expense and cow cost would be too great. We desire a cow herd that grows calves efficiently, yet is economical in our environment.

*Measuring Stick:* Every calf is weighed at weaning, and this measurement is then compared to its dam’s weight. Once again extremely high WWs cost the producer economically, and too small WW weights the producer will get docked prices for small frames.

**YW:** *Goal:* 65-90 YW EPD; 1250-1350 lb cow size

*Reasoning:* YW weight is very strongly correlated to mature cow size. We want to maintain a 1250-1350 lb cow size. At the feedlot level, you are docked for heavies and discounted for lights, so you want to stay in the “middle of the road.”

*Measuring Stick:* Every cow is weighed each year. In addition, replacement females and herd bulls are weighed at this time to achieve more accurate EPDs. We also use this for culling purposes and to select replacements.

**MK:** *Goal:* 15-25 Milk EPD

*Reasoning:* This level of EPD is ideal for the environment in which we market cattle. A surplus of milk leads to poor udder quality and decreases the cow’s longevity, as well as increasing the feed demand of the cow. A deficit of milk leads to poor WW and stunted calves.

*Measuring Stick:* Each cow is scored for udder quality. In addition, we carefully match the EPDs on bulls to fit the cow we are going to mate him too.

**MB:** *Goal:* 70% Choice/Prime.

*Reasoning:* Many people believe this is too low, but I strongly disagree. Putting fat onto your cattle is inefficient; for our operation, achieving a 70% level maintains a balanced cost of gain. In addition, cattle grading higher than this level are typically *very* fat and a high percentage are Yield Grades 4 or 5. Many people do not realize the negative consequences to producing cattle that are extreme in this category.

*Measuring Stick:* All the heifers are ultra-sounded before we choose replacements to measure carcass traits. All bulls are ultrasound measured and DNA tested, as well. I will warn you that DNA testing is still in its infancy and we are still only receiving a small percentage of the information through DNA. It will more than likely become increasingly useful in the future, but I question producers who are only making decisions based on DNA testing. All steer calves are fed out and put on a grid where we can receive carcass data. This information is used to select replacements and culls in our females, and we use the gathered information and EPDs in our bull selection process.

**YG:** *Goal:* 70% YG 1/2

*Reasoning:* Maintaining a balance between YG and QG is critical for cost of gain purposes and net dollars received from the packing plant.

*Measuring Stick:* Muscling is evaluated phenotypically along with ultrasound measurements and actual carcass data, as described more thoroughly above under “QG.”

**Phenotype:** *Goal:* Sound structured, easy fleshing, docile cattle

*Reasoning:* To me, these are the basics of cattle. If you are missing one of the three traits listed above everything else you do is irrelevant.

*Measuring Stick:* You can’t measure each trait. My experience in livestock judging has allowed me to see many differences that many people cannot pick up. Every bull and female is evaluated by me personally for these three traits. I perform a write-up on each bull and female for both my customers and for mating purposes. Before I A.I. to a bull I have seen his calves, seen the actual bull, or talked to a reliable source that has.

While many seed stock suppliers are concentrating on bending the BW and YW curve, we are attempting to bend the quality and yield grade curve; keeping our eyes on the end goal, the consumer. We feel we are one step ahead of everyone in this category. Our breeding program is designed for a balance of all traits and it is backed by hard and honest data. You cannot improve what you don’t measure. Is your breeding program on the middle of the road or is it in the ditch?

*Big Cows don't always mean bigger weaning weight but they often times mean less efficiency.*

## Percentage of Cow Weight Weaned

Weight Range (pounds)	Average Number of Records	Average Calf Weaning Weight	Percentage of Cow Weight at Weaning	Cow Weight Weaned
Less than 1,300	37	617	1,242	50%
1,301 - 1,400	39	611	1,357	45%
1,401 - 1,500	38	589	1,456	41%
1,501 - 1,600	33	598	1,549	39%
Greater than 1,600	22	572	1,698	34%

Based on performance records when 5 to 9 years of age for the Dickinson Research Extension Center cows enrolled in the North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association's CHAPS programs.

### Do you want to Improve Feed Efficiency?

Damn	Angus	Simmental	Crossbred Adv.	Simmental	Angus	Crossbred Adv.
Sire	Angus	Angus		Simmental	Simmental	
RFI	0.23	-0.01	-0.24	-0.25	-0.63	-0.38
		Crossbred			Crossbred	

**Rippe Gelbvieh  
Bull Sale:  
March 14, 2009**

Many people are touting the greatly improved feed efficiency of their animals. This is an area in which the industry has greatly enhanced their research with Residual Feed Intake (RFI), which will hopefully lead to great advances through EPDs and DNA. I have always been one to say that DNA is the future, but its meaning today is still minimal. However, we must not ignore or bypass any information that we can capture for future study and research. Some information just needs to be considered carefully, or taken with a grain of salt. I do want to warn any producer that is purchasing bulls based on their RFI; this is just *one* sample, similar to a BW or WW, and the current level of accuracy is very low. Once we incorporate an individual's RFI into EPDs this analysis will improve in accuracy. I am currently noticing some breeders are using this information to market their herdsires, and when so few people are doing this research their information can be falsified easily. BUYER BEWARE. Provided in the graph above is a much easier way to use this information. Simply by crossbreeding you can improve feed efficiency drastically.

\*A Negative Number is better. Source: Dan Faulkner, PhD

### We have a new Addition to the Rippe Gelbvieh Family.



Rippe Gelbvieh would like to introduce a new member into our family. On November 29, 2008 Dustin married Karla Dunham from Wiley, CO. She grew up on a farm and currently works for Pioneer Hi-Bred's in Greeley, CO. Although she specializes in corn and farming with her occupation, she assured me that she would like to take care of night checking the heifers.

# Rippe Gelbvieh

*WE ARE ON THE WEB AT  
[RIPPEGELBVIEH.COM](http://RIPPEGELBVIEH.COM)*



## Mission Statement:

**"To produce superior Gelbvieh and Balancer seedstock based on economically important traits, which provide more profitability for our customers, and ensure the consumer a very satisfying eating experience."**

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"Use the silver to buy whatever you like: cattle, sheep, wine or other fermented drink, or anything you wish. Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice."

Deuteronomy 14:26

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For more information about our program call Duane Rippe, (home) 402-324-4176, (cell) 402-200-0096 or Dustin Rippe, 316-323-4874 or online at [rippegelbvieh.com](http://rippegelbvieh.com)

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