

## Dates to Remember

Monthly Webinar

June 5, 2018

Webinar Reports Due

June 12, 2018

Register for June Webinar

Pre-registration is required  
[www.juniorsimmental.org/spc](http://www.juniorsimmental.org/spc).

## SPC Staff

Chip Kemp

573.239.0524

[ckemp@simmgene.com](mailto:ckemp@simmgene.com)

Jackie Atkins

406.587.4531

[jatkins@simmgene.com](mailto:jatkins@simmgene.com)

Rachel Endecott

406.587.4531

[rendecott@simmgene.com](mailto:rendecott@simmgene.com)

Kelsey Stimpson

208.936.0455

[kstimpson@simmgene.com](mailto:kstimpson@simmgene.com)

[spc@simmgene.com](mailto:spc@simmgene.com)



## Update from the Feedyard

By: Chip Kemp

I've spent a fair amount of time in the last couple days pouring over the data from your SPC steers. I would argue that you are a part of an unparalleled program.

The Steer Profitability Competition has provided you, a cattle feeder, likely more knowledge about the economics associated with your steer(s) than almost any individual feeding cattle in 2018.

The volume of information is impressive and I hope you take the time to study it and implement some of what you've learned into future decisions. I encourage you to revisit the webinars. They can make each of us wiser.

The market forces impacting your steers weren't as friendly as they could

have been. But then again they certainly weren't as harsh as they could have been. The original valuation of your feeder steers hit a bit of a high point back in November, whereas fat cattle prices this spring were a bit soft.

Fortunately, your calves gained very well throughout this project and the steers graded solid at the plant. 2018 provided a true view of a dynamic market.

We couldn't be more proud of the work and time you've put in. I hope to see many of you at the National Classic in St. Paul, MN, when we announce the final SPC results.

Please come up and say hello. Until then, a tip of the hat to you and your families on a job well done.

# The 60's, Jumbo Jets, Dad's Toolbox and Humility

by Chip Kemp, Director of Commercial and Industry Operations

Editor's Note: This article was originally published in the 2017 July/August issue of the Register magazine.

## Converge - "to move, or cause to move, toward the same point."

BIF's tagline states, "Improving the beef industry through performance evaluation".

BIF was a major force behind the standardization of performance records within our industry and helped pave the way for our modern EPD system. BIF continues to stand at the forefront of idea sharing and novel approaches in beef genetics and genomics.

ASA proudly helps author the story of "profiting through science" and how that approach has helped identify profit focused cattle that best serve the commercial producer and our industry.

Dr. Wade Shafer, ASA's current EVP, and Don Vaniman, ASA's first full-time EVP, recounted the story of "the ASA window" in ASA's 2016 Annual Report and how, from the beginning, it charted the course with the motto:

"Visual analysis tells you what a Simmental appears to be. His pedigree tells you what he should be. His performance and progeny tests tell you what he actually is."

And to this day, one can see the synergy of the two organizations. The 2017 BIF Annual Convention highlighted many ASA efforts, ASA staff, and the International Genetic Solutions (IGS) multi-breed genetic evaluation.

At age 50 Ray Kroc had yet to start his McDonald's empire and Colonel Sanders hadn't even pondered what is today a hugely successful restaurant chain. BIF and ASA are still a youthful 49 and look at what they've already done.

In 1968, and every year since, ASA members have demanded a commitment to the mission. Demanded awareness of how SimGenetics impact the marketplace. Demanded the best tools to identify that impact. Demanded cutting edge techniques to aid commer-

cial customers as they aim to "Profit through Science".

What does it take to produce these novel tools? Simple — Courage, Collaboration, Humility & Freedom.

This means the latitude and flexibility to address problems in a manner different than the norm. It requires asking the tough questions and letting the facts decide the answers — not marketers. ASA leverages precious member dollars to generate tangible tools to make programs better.

ASA reaches across traditional fence lines and boundaries to work alongside other capable and well-intentioned groups, benefiting ASA members and the industry alike. ASA leverages its collaborative relationships through IGS to allow both to succeed in ways others can't because they operate in ways others won't.

When courage, collaboration, humility, and freedom converge into one place great things happen. Monumental things. Impactful things. Things that become a gift for our entire industry.

"The only way to thrive is to innovate. It's that simple." Dr. Alex Tabarrok, George Mason University.

## A New Kind of Present

As a kid, there was always a fall back plan when it came to Dad's Christmas present. Sure, kids try to be creative and make it a surprise, but it usually comes back to the tried and true. Dads like tools. Period.

And who doesn't? Thus, when the idea of a tool to highlight feeder calf value arose it seemed a no brainer — if it could truly be done.

For generations, producers have been searching for a mechanism to show the worthiness of their calf crop that has been years in the making.

Sadly, for many producers, one set of calves of X color and of X weight brings more or less the same dollars as

the next set — regardless of how ready they are for feedlot success. And the buyer is equally as blind. Hide color, ear length, and horn status are supposed to be a proxy for some deep genetic insight into the ability to gain, convert, stay healthy, and marble.

It's like buying a used truck based on paint color, mirror shape, and cab lights without so much as a test drive or opening the hood. Dysfunctional at best, where the superior genetics are undervalued and the inferior genetics skate by without a significant penalty.

In recent years, a handful of firms have boldly attempted to shine light on this problem. With varying success, these groups have used approaches that are a step in the right direction — typically choosing to focus primarily on sire information.

Unfortunately, though, they are often limited in their ability to use cowherd knowledge. Cost of these programs can also be a barrier to entry for many commercial cattlemen.

So how to go farther? "When you need to innovate you need to collaborate," Marissa Mayer (former CEO of Yahoo).

ASA realized the creation of a feeder calf valuation tool would require significant input from across the industry and would garner the most support and uptake if done in conjunction with IGS partner breeds.

This provides a more comprehensive tool for commercial producers and leverages the power of a genetic database with roughly 18,000,000 head of known cattle.

Frankly, it's time for a change. You can either "Know" or "Guess". You decide.

Time to unwrap the IGS Feeder Profit Calculator™. This tool leverages known genetics and management practices to provide unprecedented awareness of feeder calves.

# The 60's, Jumbo Jets, Dad's Toolbox and Humility Continued...

The history of the IGS Feeder Profit Calculator™ has its roots in ASA's Terminal Index (\$TI). But, honestly, this approach starts way before ASA and way before 1968.

Many generations of thoughtful animal breeders, intrigued geneticists, and persistent thinkers built the knowledge base that directly benefits today's beef producer.

We could go all the way back to Robert Blakewell's passion for making better cattle in England. Or perhaps discuss Captain Richard King, the cattle baron whose ranch name is now synonymous with luxury and quality.

But, the likely hub would be little 'ole Ames, IA, early 1900s. A field of dreams of sorts. At least for geneticists. An all-star list of folks directly responsible for planting the seeds: Lush, Hazel, Henderson.

And then forward to renowned researchers across the country responsible for advancing the burgeoning business of cattle genetics.

That brings us full circle to ASA's \$TI which was developed over a decade ago by ASA in collaboration with Dr. Michael MacNeil, a USDA research geneticist at the time.

The \$TI is an economic selection index designed for selecting terminal sires and does exactly what it was built to do: determine genetic merit for terminal traits.

However, a tool that could account for such things as a current accounting of prices/costs, heterosis, and non-genetic factors (e.g., vaccination status and weaning), would improve the accuracy of predicting feeder calf values.

In 2014, ASA's Dr. Wade Shafer and former Director Will Townsend, went to work on such a tool — a calculator to better predict true feeder calf value. Many of the calculator's non-genetic components were sourced by Dr. David Lalman of Oklahoma State University.

Dr. MacNeil, now with Delta G Genetics, contributed with the preliminary work of the construction of the calculator.

2015 and early 2016 highlighted that ASA goes to lengths that other associations simply will not go. ASA took historic legal steps to secure the freedom for serious-minded producers everywhere to have access to powerful, profit-predicting tools.

In late 2016, ASA and IGS set about refining the tool and bringing it to the industry. ASA's Shafer, Jordan Bowman, and Chip Kemp, along with support from Steve McGuire and Dr. Matt Spangler, University of Nebraska, have honed the calculator and highlighted it to interested breeders and industry professionals.

While technology tools continue to evolve and improve, and the IGS Feeder Profit Calculator™ is no different, it is time to put true power in the hands of commercial producers and serious buyers.

IGS provides the ideal platform to generate unparalleled information on crossbred and composite feeder calves, along with the overwhelming majority of mainstream breeds. The IGS Feeder Profit Calculator™ leverages information from 12 IGS partner breed associations, data from progressive seedstock and commercial clients from across the globe, known calf health and preconditioning knowledge.

If that isn't enough, throw in the premier geneticists in the business: the ASA and IGS team, the scientists at Theta Solutions, LLC., and Spangler.

It is no wonder the IGS Feeder Profit Calculator™ is ideally suited to provide the industry's benchmark in gauging feeder calf value and empowering producers to market with confidence and allowing feeders to maximize their purchasing dollars.

Oh, and at NO COST to produc-

ers. That is correct. You can acquire a third-party validation of the profit potential in your feeder calves, at no cost to you. Why? Because awareness has profound impact — impact on a producer's decisions and bottom line. IGS partners are committed to helping producers make prudent, sound, unbiased decisions to better the economic situation of their family and their ranch. When commercial producers win their progressive seedstock providers win. When progressive seedstock providers win their allies in genetic evaluation win. So, while commercial producers can receive an IGS Feeder Profit Calculator™ certification at no cost there really is a price, but that price is born by the serious, profit-minded seedstock producers of IGS. Those seedstock providers are investing in the health and future of our industry and the sustainability of our commercial producers.

Most of us remember what first attracted us to this business. For many it was the straight, no nonsense kind of people with an unyielding passion for developing better cattle — simple to state, but certainly not easy to implement. These are the kind of folks who make up the membership of International Genetic Solutions. No surprise then they'd generate the IGS Feeder Profit Calculator™ — a straight, no nonsense tool to aid beef producers in highlighting the quality of their feeder calves to those serious buyers looking for a leg up.

For those who are interested in a certification or more information, please contact one of the IGS breed association partners or go to [InternationalGeneticSolutions.com](http://InternationalGeneticSolutions.com). You can either "Know" or "Guess". Choose "Know".