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upcoming events

Nov. 28

Office Closed- Happy
Thanksgiving!

CUP NEWS

November 2013



Preparing for the Busy Season

January through April is a tremendously busy time for the CUP Lab™, field technicians, and breeders all over the U.S. and Canada. For breeders, the difficulty lies in finding an ultrasound date that gets a contemporary group scanned so that all of the calves fall within the acceptable age window for the breed. For technicians, mapping out a route that eliminates unnecessary mileage and accommodates the breeder's schedule can be a challenge. Add in catalogue and sale deadlines and the schedules get even tighter. No one has time for unnecessary delays!

Thankfully a little bit of preparation this winter can go a long way towards smoother scanning in the spring. Now is the time to check your ultrasound equipment. ALL of your equipment! From your ultrasound machine and probe to your frame grabber, standoff guide, video cable, and freeze switch. Check your oil bottle heater, get your clipper blades sharpened, and stock up on cleaning supplies. If possible, it's a great idea to have a second set of everything for back up! Make sure you've discussed with the breeder what your needs are and the things



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"...what you see on the computer screen... is what we see at the Lab."

that they are responsible for providing. A little bit of advanced preparation now will make life less stressful in February!

Recently we have seen issues caused by worn out video cables. They are cheap and it is easy to carry an extra. Please remember that what you see on your computer screen, not the ultrasound monitor, is what gets saved and is what we see at the Lab. If there is a problem with the computer image then you need to fix it before you move on.

If you are new to Expedite, or still need to install the latest version, give us a call and we'll walk you through it. We highly recommend this program for sending images to the Lab as it is faster and more reliable than using the FTP server!

Lastly, in the spirit of giving thanks, the CUP Lab™ has received much positive feedback on our rapid turnaround time and the quality of our data. While we pride ourselves on excellent customer service, it all starts with the field technicians! So a big THANK YOU for your efforts and keep up the good work!

Check out our Facebook page for CUP Lab™ updates and the latest Industry News!

EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

- We have standoff guides, cord stiffeners, freeze switches, video cables, and USB Frame grabbers in stock.
- We have one used new version of the Aloka 500. Call the Lab for details!



www.cuplab.com



Ultrasound in Action



Silver Spur Ranch
Encampment, Wyoming

"The purpose of Silver Spur's seedstock herd is to provide bulls for commercial operations," says Cherie Viator, who handles Cattle Marketing and Special Projects for Silver Spur Ranch. "Our focus is to raise cattle that are sound, easy fleshing and fertile."

Silver Spur includes ranches in Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and Nebraska. The multi-generational operation headquarters at Encampment, Wyoming, and includes the historic New Mexico Bell and T.O. Ranches. Seedstock herds include Red Angus, Charolais, Angus, Hereford and Rangeland, a Red Angus/Charolais composite.

In addition to the seedstock sector, Silver Spur runs more than 15,000 commercial cows and retains ownership of calves through harvest. "Our commercial operations, feedlot and carcass data are the drivers in the genetics produced by our seedstock herds," says Viator.

Cattle at Silver Spur are expected to breed, raise a calf and rebreed on high-altitude pasture with limited supplements. It's a low-maintenance philosophy that directs the ranch's operations.

"Breeding cattle to hit the targets of multiple environments, the feedyard and the rail requires a disciplined approach to records, selection, culling and marketing," says Viator. "Over

time we have learned that extreme growth spreads simply do not work in most of our environments. Big growth spreads might work with abundant feed resources, but at Silver Spur cattle are expected to grow, gain and breed on grass, no creep. This means moderate growth spreads and the correct maturity patterns have more long term value to us."

Ultrasound helps Silver Spur obtain those goals.

"That's the great thing about ultrasound," says Dr. Robert Williams, Director of Breed Improvement and Foreign Marketing for the American-International Charolais Association. "It allows producers to move genetics in a particular direction. Genetic focus can be aimed at the customer, whether that be an enterprise that favors a lean product or a high-marbling market."

"It's a great tool for breeders to use to move herd in right direction," adds ultrasound technician Alvin Ruiz.

Ruiz and his son, Brett, operate WY Cattle Service out of Yoder, Wyoming. Along with ultrasound scanning, they also provide AI and freeze branding services, using a two-chute system to combine multiple services in one stop. Their service area covers most of the western United States. "These guys are extremely professional, efficient and timely," says

Viator. "We have worked with them for quite a few years and they have been great to work with, and have helped us to recognize trends within our herds."

Ultrasound data is used in combination with several other tools at Silver Spur, primarily phenotype and PAP scores. (With many locations at altitudes of 6,000 to 10,000 feet, low PAP scores are a must.) The combination of data provides information needed to produce cattle for Silver Spur's often extreme range conditions.

"Unfortunately, we have found that there are not EPDs for many of the real world survivability traits that keep cattle in the Silver Spur herds," says Viator. "It's real easy for someone to believe that a bull would work because he has a -2 BW EPD that spreads to a 131 YW EPD, 30 milk EPD and top 1% ranking for several other traits; but if he is bad footed, daughters won't breed back because of high energy requirements and sons won't pass a fertility test as yearlings, that just does not work for us no matter how

great his EPDs are."

Still, Viator says ultrasound carcass data, when combined with genomic and performance data, is a valuable tool for the ranch and for the industry, and Williams agrees: "Ultrasound has given us the opportunity to collect meaningful data across a larger and broader population – at a reasonable cost - and it will continue to play a key role as we move forward."

"The next few years should be very opportunistic for producers who have females (and bulls) to market," says Viator. "As input (labor, feed, fertilizer) costs continue to grow, the producer who has cattle that can survive on less will be the profitable producer who stays in business for the long term."

And ultrasound will help ensure those cattle also have desirable carcass traits."

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Silver Spur Ranch
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