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## 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GENETICS: RISING TO THE CHALLENGE SOUTHERN STYLE

# Contemporary Groups to EPDs

by Troy Smith



Auburn University's Lisa Kriese-Anderson discussed the limitations of raw data compared to ratios and EPDs.

CHOCTAW, MISS. (April 18, 2006) — Ultrasound data is most useful to seedstock producers and their customers when submitted to a breed association for the calculation of expected progeny difference (EPD) values, Auburn University's Lisa Kriese-Andersen told attendees of the 2006 Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) annual meeting.

EPDs are a legitimate tool for comparing individuals, she said. However, she warned against using the raw data for making broad comparisons or as a marketing aid.

At seedstock auctions, said Kriese-Andersen, it's common for an auctioneer to brag up an individual whose ultrasound ribeye measurement is 14 square inches or more. Or maybe the auctioneer prompts another bid by calling attention to the animal's 6% intramuscular fat (IMF) reading. Such tactics, she said, represent the incorrect use of raw ultrasound data.

"Individual ultrasound measurements are as useful as weights and measures, but only for comparison within a contemporary group. Knowing an ani-

mal's ribeye area or percent IMF doesn't mean much if the animals being compared did not come from the same group," Kriese-Andersen explained. "Treat ultrasound data like any other actual data, and use it correctly."

### Ensure accuracy

Kriese-Andersen said ultrasound carcass EPDs will be more accurate if seedstock breeders provide the best ultrasound data possible by measuring and submitting data from every member of a contemporary group. Omitting data from a calf the breeder may not like will distort average trait values for the group, resulting in incorrect sire rankings.

Another costly mistake occurs if breeders mix data from different contemporary groups. This results in distorted breeding values and unrealistic sire comparisons.

For more on this presentation, view the accompanying PowerPoint® presentation. An audio file will be available in the [www.bifconference.com](http://www.bifconference.com) newsroom within two weeks of the conference.

