

Summary

- Set clear objectives for your herd.
- Identify a bull breeder with similar objectives.
- Determine whether the breeder is making genetic gain. Ask for a genetic trends graph.

Is the breeder making real progress?

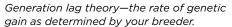
The bull breeder's breeding programme should be clear, easily explained and backed up by good records and clear facts. It is important to ask questions to establish the genetic merit of the herd and whether genetic progress is being made in the traits that are of interest to you.

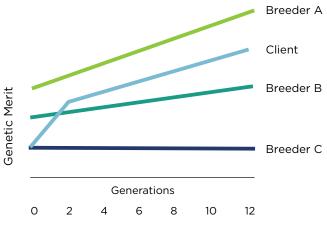
Eight important questions to ask a breeder before you buy a bull:

- 1. What are the breeding objectives for the breeder's herd and do they match yours?
- 2. Are they on BREEDPLAN or another recording system?
- 3. Can the breeder provide genetic trend graphs and do they show genetic gain?
- 4. What is the average genetic merit of the breeder's herd, in relation to the breed average?
- 5. Can the breeder supply you with dollar indexes that rank the bulls for sale?
- 6. Does the breeder mate yearling heifers and/or bulls?
- 7. Does the breeder keep dry cows?
- 8. Does the breeder assess animals using the Beef Class Structural Assessment and/or have a strong structural selection policy?

Choosing a bull breeder

An important factor when choosing a breeder is that their herd must have a higher genetic merit and rate of improvement than your herd – or your herd won't be improved. The bulls you have used in the past are a good indication of your genetic trend. It is also important there is an emphasis on structural soundness in your chosen bull breeder's herd...





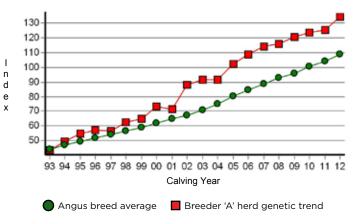
The diagram above shows the 'lag' between bull breeder and bull buyer in genetic trend over time. The buyer remains two generations behind the bull breeder in genetic trend. The bulls a buyer purchases are the easiest way to represent this trend.

As shown in this diagram, you will progress at a similar rate to Breeder A, but will remain two generations behind. If Breeders B or C were chosen, little or no genetic progress would be made.

The two-generation lag can be reduced by purchasing bulls annually, at a level above the average of the breeder's bulls.

Once you've decided on a shortlist of bull breeders, try to visit them in the six months leading up to bull buying time.

Angus Pure Index (\$) Breeder 'A' herd genetic trend



This example herd is making good genetic gain on the Angus Pure Index. It is ahead of the breed average and would be a progressive herd to be seriously considered.