



# Cattle Producer's Handbook

Miscellaneous Section

1000

## Beef Performance Glossary

*John Hough, American Polled Herford Association  
David Notter, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*

**Accuracy (of selection)**—Correlation between an animal's unknown actual breeding value and a calculated estimated breeding value.

**Average daily gain (ADG)**—Measurement of daily body weight change in animal on a feed test. Most bull tests are 140 days in length.

**Adjusted weaning weight (WW)**—An unshrunk, off-the-cow weight adjusted to 205 days of age and to a mature dam age equivalence.

**Adjusted yearling weight (YW)**—An unshrunk weight adjusted to either 365, 452, or 550 days of age.

**Alleles**—Alternate forms of genes. Because genes occur in pairs in body cells, one gene of a pair may have one effect and another gene of that same pair (allele) may have a different effect on the same trait.

**Artificial insemination (A.I.)**—The technique of placing semen from the male into the reproductive tract of the female by means other than natural service.

**Backcross**—The mating of a two-breed crossbred offspring back to one of its parental breeds. Example: A Hereford-Angus cross cow bred back to an Angus bull.

**Beef carcass data service**—A program whereby producers, for a fee, can receive carcass evaluation data on their cattle by using a special "carcass data" eartag for their slaughter animals. See county extension educator, breed representative, Beef Cattle Improvement Association representative, or area office of USDA meat grading service for information.

**Beef Improvement Federation (BIF)**—A federation of organizations, businesses, and individuals interested or involved in performance evaluation of beef cattle. The purposes of BIF are to bring about uniformity of procedures, development of programs, cooperation

among interested entities, education of its members and the ultimate of user performance evaluation methods, and to build confidence of the beef industry in the principles and potentials of performance testing.

**Birth weight (BW)**—The weight of a calf taken within 24 hours after birth. Heavy birth weights tend to be correlated with calving problems, but the conformation of the calf and the cow are contributing factors.

**Body condition score**—A score on a scale of 1 to 9, reflecting the amount of fat reserves in a cow's body, where 1 = very thin and 9 = extremely fat.

**Bos indicus**—These are the Zebu (humped) cattle including the Brahman breed in the United States.

**Bos taurus**—Includes most cattle found in the United States, including their European ancestors.

**Breed**—Animals that have a common origin and common characteristics, which distinguish them from other groups of animals within that same species.

**Breeding program goals**—The objective or "direction" of breeder's selection programs. Goals are basic decisions breeders must make to give "direction" to their breeding program. Goals should vary among breeders due to relative genetic merit of their cattle, their resources, and their markets.

**Breeding soundness examination**—Inspection of a bull involving evaluation of physical conformation and soundness through genital palpation, scrotal circumference, and testing semen for motility and morphology.

**Breeding value**—Value of an animal as a parent. The working definition is twice the difference between a very large number of progeny and the population average when individuals are mated at random within the population and all progeny are managed alike.

*Reprinted with permission from the Beef Improvement Federation.*