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**Powerful new prediction tools soon to be available to beef producers**

*Predictions from 50K technology poised to bring more information and greater accuracy to beef producers*

KALAMAZOO, Mich. (December 15, 2009)—Bovine genomics technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace. Since the first genetic marker in beef cattle—a marker for marbling—was available in 2000, rapid advancements in the breadth and application of genomics have transformed the landscape of beef cattle genetics.

In January 2010, Pfizer Animal Genetics will release a new genomic test that will expand the breadth of cattle DNA evaluation by almost a thousand-fold – from a current 56-marker technology to predictions that utilize more than 50,000 markers.

**50K HD coming soon**

“When I was growing up showing Angus heifers in the 1970s and 80s, this kind of technology and the impacts it can have were not even remotely imaginable,” explains Dr. Ronnie Green, Senior Director of Global Technical Services for Pfizer Animal Genetics. “Bringing the benefits of this new technology to beef producers and the greater beef industry is a major landmark in the history of beef cattle genetic improvement.”

The new high-density 50K (50K HD) offering is based on the Bovine SNP50 DNA-marker chip, which will provide a much more complete genetic profile of each animal evaluated. The test is being offered initially for Angus producers, with customization for other breeds expected to follow.

**New information offers endless possibilities to beef producers**

According to Green, the 50K HD test will allow for the evaluation of a host of economically

relevant traits—including tenderness, dry-matter intake, yield grade, average daily gain and feed efficiency—which are not typically evaluated using EPDs. “This by no means implies that EPDs will become obsolete,” stresses Green. “Rather, evaluation of the new suite of traits will significantly add to the decision-making toolbox available to breeders, enhancing the precision and speed at which they are able to make genetic progress in their herds.”

Breeders like Lee Leachman, Wellington, Colorado, realize the opportunities the new 50K predictions offer to his operation and the entire beef industry.

“Until now the 50K technology has been just used for research. Now, using this technology in the seedstock business will expand our selection to cover almost all of the traits that affect profitability,” Leachman says. “As an industry, we’ve evolved from selection based on a few traits to a point where we are now interested in 15 to 20 traits (like growth, carcass, fertility and longevity) that are influenced by thousands and thousands of genes. The 50K technology will increase the accuracy of our decisions on nearly every important trait.”

Leachman sees the impact that the new technology will have on profitability. “For us, there is tremendous value in using predictions from the 50K technology to choose from a group of a thousand yearling bulls, with accuracy, which ones will provide the most profit,” Leachman says. “With current technology we have to wait 2 – 3 years for progeny data to achieve the accuracy that the 50K technology can provide. This will help ensure we are picking the right bulls to use as herd sires.”

### **Finishing touches underway**

The 50K HD panel already has been evaluated in more than 4,500 Angus animals that are representative of industry genetics. In the weeks preceding the launch, Pfizer Animal Genetics is validating the trait predictions on additional, “real-world” cattle from operations across North America. This quality control measure will ensure that the 50K HD panel delivers the most reliable and trustworthy information possible to the industry.

“Improvements in efficiency, uniformity and quality will help to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of U.S. beef production,” says Green. “To be successful in the cattle business today, we have so little margin for error. The 50K HD test is a significant advancement in breeding programs that will help to ensure that beef cattle more efficiently deliver the product specifications needed by the cattle industry.”

### **About Pfizer Animal Genetics**

Pfizer Animal Genetics is a business unit of Pfizer Animal Health, a world leader in discovering and developing innovative animal vaccines and prescription medicines. Pfizer Inc. is the world’s largest research-based pharmaceutical company.

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