

VQA Sire EPD Specifications Fall 2009

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The Virginia Quality Assured Program has established itself as a reputation feeder calf program. This reputation is based on several factors, including certification of health and management protocols as well as documented genetic merit. In 2008, in excess of 10,000 steers and heifers were marketed through the VQA program and producers realized a \$46 per head advantage in gross sale price compared to similar cattle marketed the same time through graded sales.

VQA Purple Tag requirements include a yearling weight Expected Progeny Differences (EPD) specification for the sire of each calf. Minimum yearling weight EPD standards are breed-specific, and established based on the sire birth year to account for genetic improvement realized over time. This genetic standard provides assurance to buyers that the calves are sired by bulls that have favorable genetic potential for post-weaning growth performance. Post-weaning growth (ADG in feedyard) is an important determinant of feedyard cost of gain (cost to put on live weight or carcass weight) and profitability. Genetics of post-weaning growth is most effectively managed through sire selection using Yearling Weight EPD.

The following table provides the breed minimum yearling weight EPD requirements for sires and applies to bulls born fall 2005 and after. Calves sired by bulls with yearling weight EPDs greater than or equal to the minimums published are eligible for the VQA purple tag. In the event a bull does not have a yearling weight EPD, weaning weight EPD is used as the specification. For specifications for bulls born previous to fall 2005, visit the Virginia Tech Beef Extension and Education web site at <http://www.vtbeef.apsc.vt.edu/>, or contact your local Virginia Cooperative Extension office or the Virginia Cattlemen's Association.

VQA Purple Tag

Sire Minimum Yearling Weight EPD Requirements

Breed (%)	Minimum YW EPD	Minimum WW EPD*
Angus	+72	+39
Braunvieh	+4	+3
Charolais (PB and 15/16)	+27	+15
Gelbvieh (PB)	+73	+41
Gelbvieh (Balancer)	+72	+35
Hereford	+64	+38

Limousin	+69	+37
Red Angus	+54	+31
Simmental (PB)	+53	+30
Simmental (1/2)	+53	+23
*WW EPD only used if YW EPD not available		