

Association Outlook



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Herd sires born After January 1, 2022

Here we are at the beginning of another new year, 2022. The older we get the faster the years fly by. Even as we look back at the inconveniences and issues of the past year or two and tragedies for some from Covid-19, I really believe these changes that occur each year become part of our lives forever. We learn to live with them and control them so life and activity can go on.

The same applies to many of the changes we have seen in the cattle industry and especially the Shorthorn breed. New technology appears and new rules must be put in place to govern these changes over the years. The ASA Board of Directors approved a new rule pertaining to DNA testing Shorthorn and ShorthornPlus bulls born on or after January 1, 2022 when they sire calves needing to be registered. There seems to be a lot of concerns by members and breeders and misunderstandings about this ruling. I want to attempt to give you a full detailed account of how this rule works and gets put in place.

First, I want to ensure everyone knows that this does not affect any bull born before January 1, 2022. Nothing changes for those bulls that are used as herd sires.

The rule states Shorthorn and ShorthornPlus bulls born on or after January 1, 2022 must have a genomic DNA profile on record at the ASA before any calves can be registered, sired by said bulls. So there is no misunderstanding, I will give you the reasons for this rule. This rule is focusing on bulls that are turned into the pasture or nature service type matings. All bulls already have DNA requirements that will not change or have anything to do with this rule.

A bull born on Jan. 1, 2022 cannot sire a calf until he is of age to produce semen. This is generally close to 12 months of age. So, the bull may be 12 to 15 months old before he is used as a herd sire and turned out with cows. Before he

is turned out with cows, he should be DNA tested so that the resulting calves he may sire are eligible for registration. Testing him before he is turned out is the safest bet - the bull could get injured and/or die and you do not have a DNA sample. Also, think about testing any bulls you are going to sell to breeders that will use them in a registered herd. There are no penalties associated with this rule; you can DNA test a bull at any time. The bull just needs to be tested before any resulting calves can be registered. Bulls born before Jan. 1, 2022, are not affected. There are no changes in the registration fees of the resulting calves.

Now you might wonder, why the genomic test? When a genomic test is done, the markers for parentage automatically come with the genomic test. You are getting parentage markers and genomics at the same time.

There has been a continuous increase in seeing animals that are genomically tested not matching their registered parents. The search then starts to find the parent that qualifies. With many of the sires used naturally not having any DNA, it makes it extremely hard to verify parentage. The process of finding the correct sire is a struggle sometimes due to the lack of DNA markers on prospective qualifiers. By having all sires' parentage DNA on file, the process will be streamlined and help keep the herd book accurate. You ask why? Well history of other breeds doing extended research in this area has proven that approximately 12% to 15% of the registry is incorrect for parentage qualifications. These are unintentional mistakes that happen daily. Having the parentage markers to find the proper sire will make a huge difference in both the frustrations for members and the association.

Going further into the question of why genomics, as I explained the parentage markers come with a genomic DNA test. The result will provide

the new herd sire having genomically enhanced EPDs. It gets even better. Once we have a breed with all the sires genomically tested and all the performance turned in on their progeny, our accuracies will greatly increase on all genomically enhanced EPDs. You see the huge advantage is having a lifetime of performance on a sire and that sire having been genomically tested. The comparisons of the performance data to the proper markers brings credibility to the prediction of future generations. If you are going to get a sample and send it in to find parentage, take full advantage and do the genomic test too and build the future of the breed today. The more animals in the registry that have genomics done adds to the accuracy of the EPDs within the entire breed. For additional information about this ruling also reference "Since You Asked" on page 12.

These decisions made by the ASA Board of Directors and staff are entirely based on moving the breed forward and preparing members and breeders for the future. This activity may be one of the most important decisions ever made when the breed looks back 10 or 20 years from now. This is laying the groundwork for whatever comes down the pike not only in 2022, 2023 but for the next 150 years as technology will dictate value and acceptance in our industry!

I sure hope and trust you all have a very prosperous 2022 and beyond! 📷

