



Knowledge is Power!

by Sugar Kuhn

The caliber of the athletes that performed in Vegas during the ABBI competitions was truly remarkable this year, and breeders are seeking out cutting-edge information to try to keep up.

An instrumental role of the ABBI is to provide opportunities for its members to stay ahead of the curve and maximize opportunities to better their programs. By learning about integral components such as nutrition and bovine health, breeders have a chance to improve their chances of being successful. The ABBI staff put much time and effort into its planned seminar event which was held on Saturday morning, October 31, at the South Point Hotel and Casino.

The third annual ABBI Educational Seminar opened with a presentation by Dr. David Imke from the Granbury Animal Clinic of Texas. Imke sits on the ABBI's Veterinarian Advisory Board and spoke in detail about an important issue to breeders. His presentation was something any level of breeder should be interested in—mouthing of competition bulls.

Steve Ravenscroft, ABBI Classic Breeder of the Year and

increased their confidence in the system. Many were surprised by the detailed information that Imke delivered during his presentation and what it means to this important process of competition eligibility.

"We looked at 393 bulls from 20 different ranches," reported Imke. "284 or 72.3% mouthed younger than their paperwork, 72 (18.3%) mouthed older and 37 or 9.4% mouthed exact. So, 81.7% of the bulls in this study mouthed younger or exact which means your chances of a bull mouthing younger are much greater than of a bull mouthing older."

This presentation was not only informative, but should put to rest many people's uneasiness about its accuracy affecting eligibility.

"The biggest thing that I took away from the ABBI seminar had to do with Dr. Imke's presentation on mouthing," explained Ravenscroft. "He has really researched it and put a lot of time into this issue. He really drove home the importance of having your bulls mouthed as soon as their paperwork allows. Getting your bulls mouthed as soon as they are 18 months on paper. I don't want to do it any later than 24 months, since that seems to be the best way to prevent any issues with having bulls mouthed older than they may be. There is definitely a window there and breeders need to be taking advantage of the information Dr. Imke presented. When they are old enough, you better be mouthing them, and if you missed his presentation you might not fully understand how important timing is."

"The majority of bulls will mouth younger than their registered birth date," said Imke in closing. "The age at the time of validation and sire correlations are much more likely to cause a bull to mouth older than nutritional factors or chart imperfections."

The seminar continued with a visually interesting presentation by Dr. Gary Warner, arguably the industry's leading veterinarian when it comes to bucking bulls. His presentation centered around the injuries and health problems common to our industry. With many detailed slides of actual industry cases, Warner covered a host of common problems breeders either have faced or will face at some point in their programs. Warner talked in length about lameness and its role in sidelining performance.

"The majority of issues that affect bucking performance are lameness related and of those, 70% can be traced to the foot. From the basic issues that occur in natural pasture type situations like hoof rot, or abscesses and even simple hoof over-growth, to wounds like punc-



Ron Gordon of Qualitech

Adam Barkow

co-owner of World Champion Classic Bull Black Pearl, was one of many ABBI breeders who felt they could gain something by attending the seminar.

"People that are new to the industry or those who haven't been in the cattle business that long should have found this seminar really informative and helpful," said Ravenscroft. "There are many necessary parts to a program, and these athletic type animals require more. Although much of the seminar contained information I think I am already aware of, I know that these vets and nutritional companies spend a lot of time, effort and money researching and gaining new knowledge. They are always seeing something new, and because of that, breeders of all levels should be taking advantage of any information that's available to them. If you didn't make it out this year, you should really make a point to attend the next one. If you walk away with one thing new, it was worth your time."

The presentation by Dr. Imke stressed the amount of time and effort that has been put into studying the current mouthing system and how the study has ultimately

ture wounds or your more traumatic type of injuries like toe fractures, you always start with the hoof if you have a lameness issue.”

Warner also elaborated on the success he’s had personally with long-bone fractures.

“When it comes to fractures of the leg, we’ve had great success with long-bone fractures and have many bulls that make full recoveries, even going on to buck again. As long as the break is not through the skin and the owner doesn’t waste too much time getting a bull in, we are usually very optimistic about their recovery and future in these cases.”

Warner also discussed some injuries that he finds to be more frustrating.

“The most frustrating injuries for me are those that deal with the stifle, particularly when we have a bull break that growth plate. The biggest problem with this type of injury is trying to immobilize the region, because these bulls don’t want to be in one place.”

“As far as Dr. Warner’s presentation,” Ravenscroft said, “the main point that came across to me is that breeders should be paying attention to hoof care and those feet. The feet are what it’s about. Breeders need to stay on top of their hoof maintenance with these high performance athletes. They really need to be trimmed every six to 12 weeks depending on their condition—just like you would a horse’s. If you see lameness, breeders should really be paying attention and calling their vet since these types of things can lead to career-ending issues. Without those feet, you don’t have much in the way of performance.”

Perhaps the most educational part of the seminar was the final presentation by Ron Gordon of QualiTech, a premier provider of cutting-edge nutrition.

“A lot of breeders know they should be implementing a mineral program, but for financial reasons don’t, or if they do they are not consistent and only add them into a ration at certain times of the year. Or they are feeding inorganic trace minerals which don’t have the efficiency or monetary value in the long run,” said Gordon at the onset of his presentation.

Gordon explained how trace minerals are essential nutrients in the diets of all classes of cattle and that their intake and absorption are required for growth, bone development and density, a multitude of metabolic functions, immune system health and response, reproductive efficiency and health and enzyme function and structure. Additionally, trace minerals stimulate appetite and are the key to peak performance in a high-quality program such as those in the bucking bull industry.

Gordon’s presentation covered the essential trace minerals that effect normal immune function and disease resistance. Zinc, Copper and Manganese play a large role in these areas. Selenium in addition to Zinc and Copper is mandatory in reproductive efficiency, according to Gordon.

“These organic trace minerals have shown superior benefits when compared to the inorganic sulfates, oxides, carbonates and chlorides in universal trials,” noted Gordon.

Organic minerals have a higher bioavailability (the extent to which a trace mineral enters an animal’s sys-

tem and reaches a particular site of action) than inorganic substances, according to Gordon. He pointed out how organic nutrients are more easily digested and that they work longer than other micronutrients. More interesting still was his point that when antagonists are present, zinc in the organic form can have up to twice the bioavailability as inorganic zinc does—which allows a breeder to use less zinc all while getting greater nutritional results. He also explained that a deficiency of any of these organic trace minerals can compromise the efficiency of an organic mineral program.

“Keeping the level of minerals in balance in every tissue, fluid cell and organ is fundamental to maintaining good health in both animals and humans. Balance of trace minerals can be challenging when antagonistic interactions happen between minerals. A high concentration of antagonistic elements decreases biological effectiveness of the trace minerals that they attack which inhibits absorption in the intestinal tract. Mitigating conflicts between minerals is important and Quali Tech nutritionists developed SQM which is an only organically complexed trace mineral. This advanced form of protected trace mineral uses our patented polysaccharide complexing biotechnology,” said Gordon.

Gordon also explained that SQM is a process that bonds a trace mineral with a polysaccharide escort which ultimately protects the nutrients both physically and chemically until they arrive in the small intestine where they can be absorbed. While most nutritionists do not recommend organic minerals as a sole source of supplemental minerals, they have made an exception for SQM because when it is used at 100% inclusion, it offers both rumen stimulation and rumen bypass.

“When it comes to Ron Gordon’s presentation about the importance of minerals, these are things many commercial cattlemen like myself understand,” added Ravenscroft. “Hopefully breeders who didn’t know or understand this were paying attention to his presentation and took advantage of the opportunity to ask him questions so they do understand it now. A breeder can eliminate a multitude of problems, especially in your young calves, by having a proper mineral program in place. I can tell you from personal experience that your mineral program is very important to your overall herd health and to the health of these competitive bulls. Breeders can eliminate about 90% of problems, especially in your calves like scours, endotoxemia and other immune system problems by implementing a good mineral program. Your mineral program is an important part of practicing good herd health management.”

For breeders just getting into the business to established veterans like Ravenscroft, each year the ABBI seminar offers information that can benefit programs of all sizes. Imke, Warner and Gordon are all leaders in their field and—as evidenced by the crowd that would have been standing room only if more chairs hadn’t been brought in—more and more ABBI members are taking advantage of the opportunity in Las Vegas each year to learn from the best.

