

# **Pennsylvania Premier Bred Heifer Program**

## **Requirements for Program Eligibility:**

Heifers must be nominated by July 15th.

## **Identification Requirements:**

All heifers are required to arrive with an inserted 840 USDA RFID ear tag that is registered to the premise number of their farm of origin.

To acquire a information about obtaining premise number and receive USDA 840 tags please contact the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Anima Health and Diagnostics Services at 717-836-3235 or visit [www.agriculture.state.pa.us](http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us) and click on the Premises ID button.

## **Management of heifers:**

Heifers MUST be managed so that their first calf will be born before 27 months of age.

Heifers must be treated for both internal and external parasites within 30 days prior sale. The use of implants is not permitted for heifers that are consigned into the program. It is recommended that heifers receive an ionophore throughout development. Heifers must have access to a balanced mineral program. Long term use of MGS is prohibited, but can be utilized for periods up to 14 days to be used for estrous synchronization.

It is recommended that heifers be managed in their own contemporary group.

It is recommended that an estrus synchronization protocol and at least one service of Artificial Insemination be implemented with all heifers. Natural service sires are acceptable assuming they meet the requirements listed under the service sire section.

## **Physical appearance:**

Heifers are not to have any horns or scurs. If cattle have been dehorned, they must be fully healed at time of sale. In addition to this, heifers are prohibited from sale if they have an active case of pinkeye or have scars in eyes as a result of pinkeye. Any physical blemishes or deformities are also disqualification. Sale executives reserve the right to disqualify heifers for any deformities on day of sale.

## **Pre-breeding Evaluation:**

All heifers are required to have to be evaluated for an expected standard of reproductive measures. Heifers eligible for sale are required to have a minimal pelvic area of >150 cm<sup>2</sup> and reproductive tract score of 2. It is recommended that these evaluations are conducted 4 to 6 weeks before the onset of the breeding season. If heifers do not meet the required pelvic measurement pre-breeding, they can be re-measured at the time of pregnancy diagnosis and

must measure >180 cm<sup>2</sup>. You must record the date in which evaluation was performed, identification number, pelvic measurement, and reproductive score for each heifer.

***Minimum vaccination requirements:*** A comprehensive herd health vaccination program starting at weaning age or before should be administered under the advice and guidance of your veterinarian in the context of a valid veterinary-client-patient relationship.

1. Tuberculosis (TB) test are required for cattle consigned from states without a TB free status.
2. *Weaning*  
Heifers must be vaccinated and boosted for IBR, BVD, PI 3, BRSV, leptospirosis (5-way), vibriosis and 7-way clostridia. Heifers must be 5 months of age or older at time of vaccinations. Follow label directions for all products used.
3. *Prebreeding*  
To maximize protection against reproductive loss, vaccinations against Leptospirosis (5-way) and Vibriosis must be given between 60 and 30 days prior to breeding. A booster vaccination against IBR and BVD is required between 60 and 30 days prior to breeding. Modified live viral vaccines for IBR and BVD are recommended. If killed viral vaccine products are used, two boosters are strongly recommended. Follow label directions for all products used.
4. *Pregnancy check:*  
A booster vaccination against Leptospirosis (5-way) is required at pregnancy examination.

The following statement must appear on the Certificate of Veterinary Inspection: **“Johne’s Disease (Paratuberculosis) has not been diagnosed in this herd within the past 12 months. There have been no clinical signs of BVD infection, mucosal disease or type II BVD in the herd of origin within the past 6 months, or cases of ringworm in the past 30 days”**.

#### **Pregnancy Examination:**

It is required to report heifer individual identification, pregnancy status, AI or natural service sire, and fetal age in days. The designated breeding season should not extend longer than 65 days.

All heifers are required to be bred for spring calving. Heifers are required to be confirmed a minimum of 60 days pregnant by time of sale. Animal individual identification, pregnancy status and fetus age are required to be reported. Heifers in group lots should be within a 45 day window of gestation or less. If artificial insemination was utilized, service date must be reported in addition to service sire. Heifers that fail to conceive during the breeding season, or lose a pregnancy after the set breeding season are not eligible for sale.

#### **Weight and body condition:**

Prior to sale, heifers will be screened to insure appropriate frame, muscle, structural soundness, and disposition. It is required that meet a minimum USDA frame score grade of medium for

cows (Medium = mature weight of 1,100 to 1,250 pounds with 0.2 inch of backfat at the 12<sup>th</sup> rib), in addition to meeting a USDA feeder calf muscle score of 1 or 2. (*This will be done by trained officials at time of sale.*)

Bred heifer must weigh a minimum of 800 pounds on day of sale, in addition to having a body condition score between a 5 and 8 on the standard scoring system of 1 to 9.

The screening committee reserves the right to refuse any heifer that does not meet the previously stated requirements, or for any reasons that would not be deemed acceptable for sale.

#### **BVD-PI:**

Heifers offered for sale must be tested and guaranteed negative for BVD-PI.

#### **Service sires:**

Heifers may be bred either utilizing artificial insemination or natural service sires. In order for sires to be eligible for mating to heifers, they must have their own individual identification, be registered with their respective national breed registry, and have a complete set of EPD's published by said breed registry. Sires must be considered heifer acceptable, as defined by having and calving ease direct EPD that ranks in the top 33% of the breed AND a birth weight EPD that ranks in the lower 50% of the breed. Service sires being used in AI programs must have minimum accuracies of 0.6 on a scale from 0 to 1 for both EPDs of Birth Weight and Calving Ease Direct.

For questions regarding service sire acceptance, please call Ben Williamson at (814) 867-4917.

Heifers that are bred using artificial insemination (AI) cannot be exposed to natural service sires for 14 days following AI service.

#### **Requirements to Report for Each Heifer:**

- Individual identification
- Heifer date of birth
- A certificate of health from a veterinarian
- Breed type of heifer
- Pre-breeding pelvic area
- Pre-breeding reproductive tract score
- Service sire (AI, natural service, or both) and complete set of EPD's of sires
- Date in which evaluations were performed

#### **Program Cost:**

1. There will be a \$50 per heifer nomination fee for heifers that will be cataloged for sale, which will be applied toward the sale advertising cost of the sale. Make checks payable

to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. This fee will be a non-refundable fee and will be due

2. Final sale expenses will be determined by the sales gross and deducted from the sales receipt.
3. Nomination Fees are due **July 15<sup>th</sup>**. This fee is applied to the number of animals consigned, and does not indicate a specific consignments. Consignments can be substituted with eligible heifers.
4. Sale Information is due by **August 15<sup>th</sup>**. Please mail fees and information to:  
PDA Livestock Evaluation Center  
1494 West Pine Grove Road  
PA Furnace, PA 16865

**Pennsylvania Premier Bred Heifer Program Nomination Form**

**Nomination Fees of \$50 per Entry are due by July 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**Heifer Information is due by August 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**Farm Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Owner:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cell Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Mail Checks and Nominations to:**

PDA Livestock Evaluation Center  
1494 West Pine Grove Road  
PA Furnace, PA 16865

Make checks payable to: **Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**

**ID:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Breed Type:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Color:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Pre-Breeding Pelvic Area:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Reproductive Tract Score:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**AI Service Sire Registration #:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Service Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Natural Service Sire Registration #:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dates of Exposure:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Any Other Brief Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

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