

Beelzebub and Me

or

“How I Learned to Love Old Nick in a Straw”

Prologue

I turned to Mrs. Chambers while submitting the registration for “Stanley Bucket” (SMD BallanNavis), the latest little addition from our old friend in the semen tank, and said; “How long after this is online will it be before we get another whiff of sulfur, fire and brimstone, and great gnashing of teeth?” Mrs. C. missed it by a week.

My little buddy in the tank is of course Lucifer of Knotting. The “Old Boy” and I, if I maybe so bold as to claim affinity with the nether world, have become very good friends over the years. Favored with fifteen calves bearing “the mark”, *the Mrs. never failing to remind me of the 5 straws that didn’t take*, and over 20 second generation dexters, I feel that I have come to know him fairly well.

In our little herd of dexters we have found Lucifer of Knotting to be a reliably consistent improver in general and an outstanding improver in some specific areas. The traits that we most consistently see improved or maintained in Lucifer offspring are: capaciousness from the heart girth through the barrel into a full and level flank; excellent spring of rib, outstanding width throughout - across the loin, hooks and pins, good transition from the shoulder into the neck, and decent topline from the hooks to the shoulder.

Lucifer’s female offspring have reliably shown good femininity and refinement in the face and neck, with excellent width of eyes, which are full, bright, and intelligent, admirable muzzle width with large nostrils, and reliably consistent strength of jaw. Lucifer will most reliably improve teat size and teat placement and give noticeable improvement in both fore and rear udder attachment. His daughters are among the most ‘milky’ in our herd.

Lucifer’s female and male offspring are well and evenly muscled, with noticeable improvement in a fuller, deeper muscling of the rear quarter.

A few SMD stock that exemplify what Lucifer can impart to a dexter herd when used on a good cow.





“Old Gooseberry” is not without some areas in which he does not impart improvement, the two we have most consistently seen are in the rump angle, which in some of his offspring tend to slope too much from hooks to pins and related to that is a tail setting that is recessed more than is ideal. We have also not found Lucifer to improve depth of heel.

We have **not** had offspring from Lucifer that were aggressive. If there is any consistent temperament trait from Lucifer that we have experienced it is that **some** are overly shy – much more likely to flee an unknown situation than to fight. Some Lucifer offspring will also fairly consistently be the first animals in the herd to see the deer on the next hill, the stray dog, and a stranger getting out of a strange pickup. We have not seen this alertness / shyness in anyway uniformly across his offspring. We also have had Lucifer offspring that are in no manner shy and are the first in the herd to beg for a good scratch from a complete stranger. The most consistent element that we see in this difference in offspring is in the dam. Our shy Lucifer offspring are from our relatively more shy cows. Therefore we have used Lucifer most consistently on our less shy / flighty cows to excellent effect. From our experience, I would suggest that to the extent Lucifer imparts temperament that he does so through not reducing shyness / flightiness and may add some to what is variously reported to be from a low to moderately heritable trait.

Epilogue

Alas, our rack of “Old Bendy” now hangs empty at -320F. Stanley Bucket rests in the barn mulling cow thoughts over his cud, blissfully unaware of his unenviable position on the cusp of very high expectations from his sire’s work and his keeper’s hopes.

Mrs. Chambers, no mean judge of good cattle flesh, cyphering at the kitchen table over next year’s breeding plan, the incongruous “Find some more Lucifer.” frequently passing from the kitchen to me in repose.

I contemplate the good cows in the pasture courtesy of my good friend Old Nick in the straw and give the Devil his due....

Jeff

Never Argue With A Fool – They Will Drag You Down To Their Level; Then Beat You With Experience!

Twain