

# Research Summaries I

"Beef & General"

*Moderator - Rob Atwill*

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## An Epidemiological Evaluation of Breeding Soundness Examinations in Beef Bulls: Effects of the Revised Standards

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Breeding soundness is a crucial criterion when selecting or maintaining bulls for breeding stock. The breeding soundness examination (BSE) is a commonly used tool for bull selection, retention, and usage in beef herds and artificial insemination centers. Ten to twenty percent of bulls evaluated fail the BSE according to the criteria previously set forth by the Society for Theriogenology.

The guidelines and criteria for the BSE were altered effective January, 1993. Concern about the effects of these changes on the pass/fail rate of bulls has been expressed. One objective of this study was to evaluate the effect of the revised breeding soundness examination criteria on the pass fail/rate of beef bulls.

Morphology slides and corresponding forms from breeding soundness examinations performed by 35 veterinarians from a 5 state region were utilized in this

observational study. Data were limited to breeding soundness examinations conducted during 1994. A total of 3974 breeding soundness examinations were included. Semen morphology was evaluated by the primary researcher to determine the numbers of primary and secondary defects, and the total number of defects per 100 sperm cells examined. The morphology data were combined with scrotal circumference and motility information from the BSE form, resulting in a final classification for breeding soundness potential using both the previous and current scoring systems of the Society for Theriogenology. The overall pass/fail rate of the BSE and the rate within age categories will be discussed for both scoring systems. Discussion of the pass/fail rate of bulls by the two criteria will aid practitioners in their selection of BSE criteria that they feel are most meaningful and useful.