BULL TEST 11/16/2016 T. SCHNEIDER

Consigners from as far away as Iowa Falls, Iowa, and Burlington, Wisconsin, will have to wait until April to learn how their animals perform in the annual St. Croix Valley Bull Test. The test began earlier this month at the Mann Valley Farm, which is run by UW-River Falls. Tori Schneider has the story.

MP3 RUNS: 1:15 O/C: STD.

TORI SCHNEIDER: THE TEST IS SET UP AS A COMPETITION BETWEEN THE 70 ANIMALS PARTICIPATING. EACH ANIMAL IS KEPT IN THE SAME ENVIRONMENT AND FED THE SAME FOOD AS ALL THE OTHERS FOR 112 DAYS. THEY ARE FIRST DIVIDED BY SIZE AND CATEGORIZED BY BREED. HARRY LARSEN, LABORATORY FARM ASSOCIATE, IS IN CHARGE OF THE DAY-TO-DAY CARE OF THE ANIMALS.

HARRY LARSEN: “THERE’S A LOT OF VARIABLES THAT CAN TAKE PLACE WHILE THEY’RE HERE BUT REALLY THAT THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF IT IS TO PICK OUT THOSE THAT HAVE DONE THE BEST GENETICALLY.”

TORI SCHNEIDER: STACY MYERS IS THE CHAIR OF THE ST. CROIX VALLEY BULL TEST BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND HAS ALSO BEEN A CONSIGNER IN THE SALE SINCE 2003. HE SAYS THAT THE TEST COMPARES TO OTHERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY INCLUDING THE TESTS THAT TAKE PLACE AT PURDUE UNIVERSITY, UW-PLATTEVILLE, AND IN THE STATES OF IOWA AND MINNESOTA.

STACY MYERS: “WE’D LIKE TO THINK THE QUALITY OF THE CATTLE THAT ARE HERE COMPARE WITH ANY OF THE OTHER BULL TESTS AROUND THE COUNTRY. A LOT OF THE A-I BULLS THAT ARE USED ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES ARE REPRESENTED HERE IN THIS PEN. WE HOPE TO THINK THE COWS ARE JUST AS GOOD.”

TORI SCHNEIDER: AT THE END OF THE TEST, THE BULLS WILL BE GIVEN AN INDEX BASED ON THEIR WEIGHT GAIN SINCE BIRTH AND SINCE THE START OF THE TEST. THE TOP FORTY TO FIFTY BULLS WILL THEN BE AUCTIONED ON APRIL 15, 2017. FOR THE FALCON NEWS SERVICE, I’M TORI SCHNEIDER.

UWRF’s student organization, the Beef Management Team, helps with the test and sale by clipping and cleaning the animals, and also by creating videos of the animals for use in an online auction. This gives students an opportunity to get hands-on experience working with beef cattle and learn skills they will need to work in the industry.

###