



## Optimate Planning

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EastGen has begun to rollout a new mating software called **OptiMate**. This tool builds upon the features that producers have come to trust with ProGen. **OptiMate** allows you to build your herd's genetic plan right into the mating software. Now you can determine how much sexed semen, embryos, and beef semen can be used in your herd depending on your specific goals. Before picking a genetic strategy, here are three questions you need to answer:

- 1) **What is your herd's future and where do you believe the market will be in five years?** The first part of this question revolves around whether you plan to grow or maintain your current herd size. The second part is much more challenging for herds that are in growth mode. It becomes hard to predict the market with the amount of factors that are not in your control such as trade, climate, and general market conditions.
- 2) **What is the performance situation for your herd at present?** The big five metrics you need monitored are pregnancy rate (>20%), conception rate (>40%), age at first calving (24 or less), still birth rate (<8%) and culling (heifers and first lactations especially). These metrics all impact the amount of cows and heifers you need to carry in your herd to maintain size or grow. Maximizing these metrics will ensure you get full benefit of your investment in genetics.
- 3) **What are your genetic goals and plans?** For the dairy industry, there are many different ways to get genetic progress to meet the needs of your herd while striving for your ideal cow. If your herd is in growth mode, then sexed semen is an obvious part of the plan. If you have a market and space to sell excess heifers, then you can afford to over generate heifer requirements. If you don't have the space or market, then a bottom end beef strategy may be required with a product such as Repromix Angus.

Whatever strategy you determine is right for you, your EastGen representative can find you the resources needed to make it happen.