



## Why Texas Longhorn Cattle?

By Russell Hooks

In my thirty five plus years of breeding, preserving and promoting Texas Longhorn cattle I have been ask numerous questions about the breed. However I would have to say the most often asked question is “why do you raise Longhorns”. This question is not a simple single answer but rather a question with multiple answers which I am going to share with you in this article.

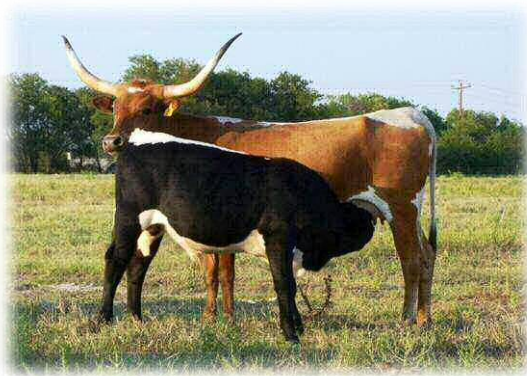
First off, they are one of the easiest breeds of cattle to raise and do not require a lot of cattle knowledge or experience working with cattle. One of the factors that make Longhorns a “no hassle” breed is their natural resistance to numerous diseases and parasites. Longhorns seem to have a natural immunity developed over centuries of having to make it on their own with little too no help from mankind. This translates into fewer veterinarian bills and less maintenance cost for an individual choosing to raise Texas Longhorns.

Another reason as to “why Longhorns” is their browse utilization. Longhorn cattle will take advantage of whatever type of forage is available thus requiring less supplemental feed to maintain an adequate body condition. Most Longhorn cows weight less than 1200lbs which means less cost to

maintain the cows. They also put less stress on your pastures by their lower forage requirements and by their willingness to consume different types of vegetation. This allows the rancher to possibly increase his carrying capacity, which increases the number calves produced thus increasing the potential profits.

Adaptability is another good reason for raising Longhorn cattle. Unlike many of the other cattle breeds the Longhorn thrives in climates from the hot, damp coastal regions to the harsh cold of the far north. Longhorns are not only raised in the US but in Australia, the Netherlands and Canada. They will thrive in almost any environment.

When considering a breed of cattle to raise and own, production is a key factor in making a breed selection. Longhorns excel in the two very important production traits, fertility and reproductive efficiency. These are two very solid reasons for “why Longhorns”. The Longhorns fertility is exemplified by the breed’s ability to breed at a young age, then to breed back quickly after calving and calve into their teenage years. Longhorn cattle have been known for their reproductive efficiency for many years, which has been a key to their survival. They have a larger pelvic opening than most breeds and low birth weights which almost guarantees a live calf at birth. This also means no sleepless nights sitting up waiting to see if you’re going to have to help with the delivery of the calf or call the vet.



Longhorn cows will not only deliver a live calf but a good Longhorn cow will generally wean a calf that weights at least 40-50% of cow’s weight at weaning. This is a good example of the Longhorns efficiency in production and is another benefit of raising Longhorns over other breeds of cattle.



When most other breeds of cattle are being culled from the herd at the ages of 6 to 8 years of age a Longhorn is just hitting its prime. Longhorns are known for their longevity which is another sound business reason for raising Longhorn cattle. Texas Longhorns will breed and calve well into their teen years with some continuing into their twenties. Their longevity results in more live calves over the years and means more dollars in the producer's pocket. It also means that fewer replacement heifers need to be retained for the herd.

We have covered some of the business reasons for “why Longhorns” but now let's discuss some of the more personal reasons for choosing Texas Longhorns. For some folks it is the history and nostalgia of the legendary Texas Longhorn that first catches their interest. After all the Texas Longhorn is one of the main symbols of the old west and stirs up images of cowboys, horses, cattle drives, big ranches, cattle barons, outlaws and gunfights. When you think about it the cattle drives which moved Longhorns that were roaming free in Texas up the trails to the northern market places were actually laying the foundation for our current livestock market. Today's cattle industry was built by the Texas Longhorn and the American Cowboy. The Texas Longhorn Breeders Association of America (TLBAA) was established in 1964 to preserve the genetics and history of the Texas Longhorn cattle which were near extinction. Today the TLBAA registers between 5000-6000 head per year.

As you look at a lot of today's breeds of cattle you will find that most are very similar in look and type almost like they came from the same cookie cutter mold. Most breeds are working to have this consistent look in their cattle. But it is the uniqueness of the Texas Longhorn that draws some people to the Longhorn breed. They are all truly one of a kind because no two are alike in color, body or horn shapes which makes for a beautiful pasture setting.

As you spend time around Longhorn cattle you will soon learn that they all have their own individual personality which makes them a joy to be around. They are a very intelligent breed with a good memory and are easy to train and work. They will respond to positive treatment or handling in a positive way but will



also respond in a negative way to rough or negative treatment.

The Texas Longhorn is basically a good all-around breed of cattle because they are a multipurpose breed. They will work for just about anyone from the serious cattleman to the recreational rancher. Prospective buyers can find cattle that will fit their budget, lifestyle and goals. Whether your goals are to produce flashy color on your cattle, twisty horns or the longest horns you will be able to find cattle at an affordable price to help you achieve your

goals. You can even raise Longhorns for meat. Yes, I am saying you can eat Longhorns. Most people at first are surprised by the fact that you can eat Longhorn meat. They are generally more surprised to find out how tasty it is and that it is healthier for you. Longhorn beef is some of the healthiest meat you can eat. It is lower in cholesterol than chicken and turkey. If you need to watch your cholesterol or calorie intake you may not have to give up eating beef if you start eating Longhorn beef. Healthy beef for your family is another reason as to “why Longhorns”.

If you are looking at getting involved in raising cattle, adding to your cattle operation or looking to raise beef for your family’s table then you should take a serious look at the Texas Longhorn Breed.






### How meats compare nutritionally

(Information based on 3.5 oz. serving)

Meat	Calories	Protein (gms)	Fat (gms)	Cholesterol (gms)
Ground Beef	289	24.1	20.7	90.0
Lean Ground	272	24.7	18.5	87.7
Chicken, dk	205	27.4	9.7	93.8
Lamb Chop	216	30.0	9.7	95.8
Pork Loin	190	28.6	9.8	79.6
Pork Chops	202	30.2	8.1	82.7
Lamb Leg	191	28.3	7.7	89.7
Pot Roast	210	33.0	7.6	101.0
Venison	207	33.5	6.4	4.0
Turkey	170	29.3	5.0	76.6
Top Round	180	31.7	4.9	84.6
Chicken, Wht	173	30.9	4.5	85.7
Longhorn	140	25.5	3.7	61.5

Source: Longhorn data: "Nutrient Density of Beef From Texas Longhorn Cattle; Texas A&M; 1987. Other data: USDA, USA Today 11/29/91, Pope Lab, Inc., Dallas, TX

Texas Longhorn Breed Guidelines

Characteristics of Longhorns	Desirable	Objectionable	Undesirable
<p>A. Functional Efficiency</p> <p>1. Fertility</p>  <p><i>Example of good Brood cow</i></p>  <p><i>Example of good Brood cow</i></p>	<p>Early Maturity and Longevity Cows – Feminine, regular and early</p>  <p><i>Example of good brood cow</i></p> <p>Bull – Masculine, virile, high libido. <i>Example below</i></p> 	<p>Abnormal reproductive organs</p>	
<p>2. Sheath</p> 	<p>Retractable prepuce, small orifice, flat small-sized navel flap</p> 		<p>Long pendulous sheath, non-retractable prepuce. Excessive navel flap both female &amp; male.</p>  <p><i>Example of objectionable/ undesirable sheath</i></p>

Texas Longhorn Breed Guidelines

Characteristics of Longhorns		Desirable	Objectionable	Undesirable
3. Udder and teats	 <p><i>Example of well attached &amp; balanced udder, good teat pigmentation</i></p>	<p>Well attached, balance</p>  <p><i>Example of good attachment</i></p>	<p>Teats too large for a calf to nurse at birth; meaty, broken, loosely attached. <i>Example of three udder defects below, large quarters, blind quarter and meaty.</i></p>  <p><i>Example of two blind quarters</i></p> 	<p>Hard, firm, meaty udder, unable to produce enough milk for calf.</p>  <p><i>Example of two blind quarters</i></p>
4. Disposition	Mild, tractable	Nervous		
5. Size	Adequate for age	Small for age, extremely oversized		
6. Hair (depending on environment)	Short, straight, slick coat	Long, curly hair		
7. Hide	Vascular, mellow and pliable navel flap	Tight, excessive skin fold, excessive sheath or navel flap		Extra large sheath or navel flap
8. Legs and feet	Squarely set, sound feet and joints	Very short legs, sickle hocks and "post" legs. Mule-footed, extra close, weak hocks.		<p><i>Below example of weak hocks &amp; poor leg set.</i></p> 

Texas Longhorn Breed Guidelines

Characteristics of Longhorns

B. Conformation

1. General type or Form



Good length with moderate depth and thickness. Top of hips higher than top of shoulders. Elliptical shaped body for heat adaptation. Sound dense bones. Strong legs with free movement; Bulls slightly thicker and heavier muscled than cows. Exhibiting crest development on neck.

Desirable

Objectionable

Example of poor conformation. High shoulders, weak back and legs.



Undesirable

2. Head



Example of Flap poll, small ears with masculine face. Not blocky.

Showing masculinity and femininity according to sex; moderate width with pronounced length from poll to muzzle. Straight profile. Some evidence of throat flap.



Example of Flap poll, small ears with long feminine face.



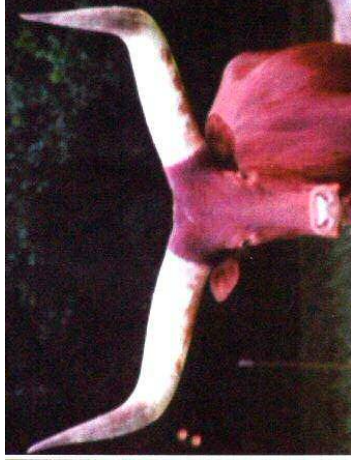
Example of Flap poll, small ears with long feminine face.

Nose extremely "pinched-in" above nostrils. Short, blocky head. Convex forehead. "Roman Nose". Pendulous dewlap.



Example of a animal showing non-longhorn traits. Mainly in the ear size, head shape and color pattern.







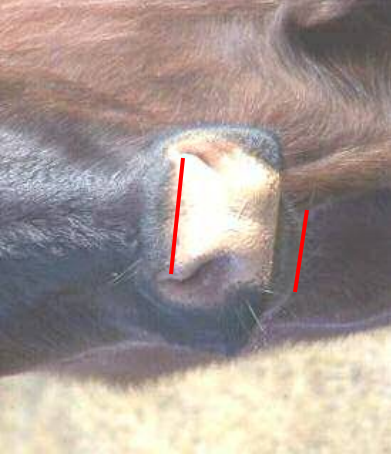


Below is Example of a Watusi Longhorn cross animal.



Watusi cattle have a very distinct looking head shape as well as ear, eye and horn set. These features should be avoided. Notice the poll set below.





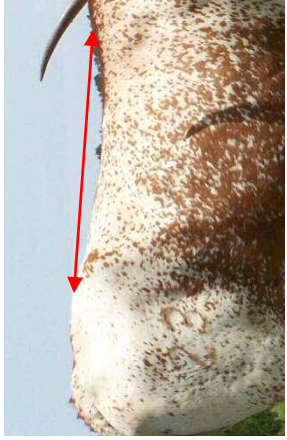
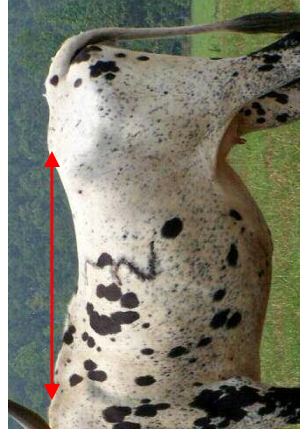




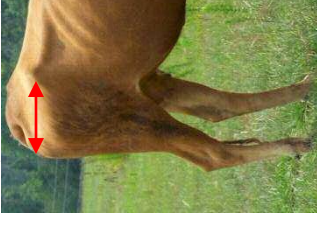





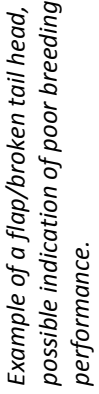
Texas Longhorn Breed Guidelines

Characteristics of Longhorns	Desirable	Objectionable	Undesirable
<p>3. Ears</p> 	<p>Medium to small, short round ears. Set close to the horns.</p> 	<p>Longer, droopy ears. Example shows ears that should be closer to the horns.</p> 	<p>Extremely large, droopy ears.</p>
<p>4. Muzzle</p>  <p>Example of Mealy mouthed</p>	<p>Mealy mouthed, pigmented</p> 	<p>Non-pigmented Example of lesser pigmentation around eyes and on nose.</p> 	<p>Wry nose, over shot or undershot jaw Example crooked nose and jaw</p> 
<p>5. Neck</p>  <p>Example of average dewlap.</p>	<p>Trim in cows. Muscular in bulls. Example of masculinity and of crest on the neck.</p> 	<p>Ewe neck, very long or very short</p>	



Texas Longhorn Breed Guidelines



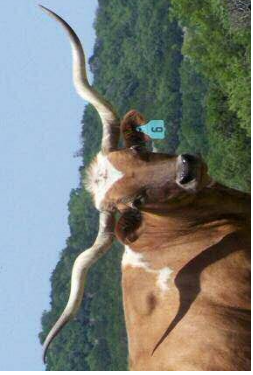




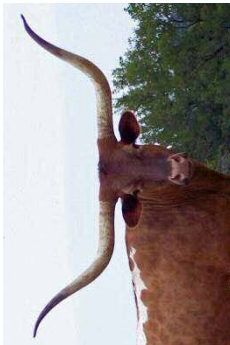


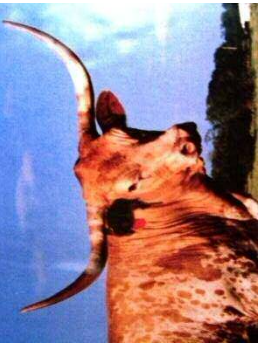


Characteristics of Longhorns	Desirable	Objectionable	Undesirable
<p>6. Shoulders</p>	<p>Free moving, smooth and well-muscled. The shoulders and legs should form a V shape. Not a rectangle or square, this is a genetic trait that is passed to offspring and effects</p> 	<p>Open on top, sharply dropping down behind shoulders.</p> 	<p>Examples to the left and below are of high, open shoulders dropping down behind the shoulders.</p> 
<p>7. Brisket</p> 	<p>Trim and free from excessive fleshiness</p> 	<p>Excessive fat, downward sloping and excessive dewlap</p>	
<p>8. Heart Girth</p>	<p>Elliptical and full</p>	<p>Pinched girth</p>	
<p>9. Back</p>	<p>Strong top-line with slope upward from shoulders to hook bones. Top-line should not be flap or humped-up when the animal is walking but should dip down slightly as the animal moves.</p> 	<p>Extreme swayback <i>Example of a moderate swayback, which will probably increase with time.</i></p> 	

Texas Longhorn Breed Guidelines			
Characteristics of Longhorns	Desirable	Objectionable	Undesirable
10. Loin	Reasonably broad and full	Extremely narrow and low	
11. Ribs	Moderately well sprung, elliptical	Slab sided	
12. Hooks	Broad, reasonably prominent and sloping downward toward pin bones 	Narrowness in hooks Example of extremely level hooks to pins and fat on tail head and pin bones. 	Example of extremely level hooks to pins. 
13. Rump	Long, moderately sloping from hooks to pins	Short, narrow and extremely droopy	Round/sloping rump showing the possibility of Brahman influence. 
14. Tail and Tail heads	Long full switch Example of fishhook tail head. This is linked to the pelvic area which effects calving ease  Example of a flat tail head 	Very short tail Example of extremely high tail head 	Wry tail  Example of a flap/broken tail head, possible indication of poor breeding performance. 

Texas Longhorn Breed Guidelines

Characteristics of Longhorns	Desirable	Objectionable	Undesirable
<p>15. Hindquarters</p>	<p>Reasonably broad and muscular, Moderately wide at pins</p>	<p>Extremely narrow</p>	<p>Double muscling</p>
<p>C. Color</p> <p>1. Coat</p>  <p><i>Roan-she was born white w/red ears, mouth and feet. More color came with age.</i></p>  <p><i>Slate gray, tan roan</i></p>	<p>“Their colors were more varied than those of the rainbow. There were brindles; blues-mulberry blue, ringstreaked blue, speckled blue; grullas – so named because they had the hue of the sandhill crane, also called mouse-colored, or slate duns, washed-out and Jersey creams – all hues of “yellow”, browns with bay points; blacks, solids and splotted with white, brown and red; whites both clearly bright and dirty speckled; many sabinas, red-and-white peppered; reds of all shades except the dark richness characteristic of Hereford (and Watusi), pale reds being very common; paints of many combinations. The line along the back was common, as in the mustang breed. Coarse brown hairs around the ears were characteristic. The shadings and combinations of colors were so various that no two were alike.” J. Frank Dobie</p>  <p><i>Red roan</i></p>  <p><i>Red w/ white topline &amp; Underline</i></p>  <p><i>Parker Brown</i></p>  <p><i>Blue roan</i></p>  <p><i>Light red w/ white patches</i></p>  <p><i>Red &amp; white spotted</i></p>  <p><i>Red &amp; white splotted</i></p>  <p><i>Slight brindle</i></p> <p><i>Examples to the left are of an undesirable color pattern. This is a common pattern found on Watusi and Watusi Longhorn cross cattle</i></p>		

Texas Longhorn Breed Guidelines

D. Horns	Superior	Desirable	Acceptable	Undesirable
<p>1. Tip-to-Tip Measurement</p> <p><i>Examples of good Horn Shapes</i></p>   	<p>Cows: Slender, wide twisted outward; more than 60" on mature cows.</p> <p>Bulls: Horns with longitudinal length and forward and upward sweep. More than 60" at maturity</p> <p><i>Examples of good Horn Shapes</i></p>   	<p>Cows: Slender, wide twisted outward; more than 50" on mature cows.</p> <p>Bulls: Horns with longitudinal length and forward and upward sweep. More than 50" at maturity</p> <p><i>Examples of good Horn Shapes</i></p>   	<p>Cows: Slender, wide twisted outward; more than 40" on mature cows.</p> <p>Bulls: Horns with longitudinal length and forward and upward sweep. More than 40" at maturity</p> <p><i>Examples of good Horn Shapes</i></p>  <p><i>Example of good Horn Shape but with questionable poll with knot in the center of poll.</i></p> 	<p>Cows: Broad-based horns or extremely large based horns that attach to the poll in a v or upward position. Horns that curve sharply upward. Less than 40" at maturity.</p> <p>Bulls: Broad-based horns or extremely large based horns that attach to the poll in a v or upward position. Horns that curve sharply upward. Less than 40" at maturity</p>  <p><i>Example of a Watusi Poll, large base, thick horn and v shaped attachment.</i></p>  <p><i>Example of large base and thick horn out pasted the base, which is a Watusi trait.</i></p>

## How to Measure the Quality of a Texas Longhorn Female

In today's Longhorn market it is not always easy to judge the true value or quality of the cattle. There are cattle selling for prices ranging from \$600 dollars all the way up to \$50,000. What is the difference between the bottom and top prices? The answer is HORNS... not necessarily overall quality. We have come a long way when it comes to horn growth in this industry. When I got involved with



Measles - One of the greatest producing cows of all time. Valued at \$600,000 in the 1980's

Texas Longhorn cattle in the 1980's we were celebrating 40" inches of tip-to-tip horn, which would be laughed at today. But back then it was not all about horn, it was about saving the breed, fertility, longevity, mothering ability...just to mention a few of the other traits that were valued by those breeders so many years ago. Today some breeders seem to believe that there is only one sure fire way to determine the value of top Texas Longhorn cattle...the tape measure...the bigger the horn the higher the price. However, like in the 1980's I believe this is only one of many things that must be considered when determining the value of our cattle. Breeders who use the tape measure as their only way of placing value on Longhorn cattle are overlooking many very important attributes of the Longhorn.

Judging the quality of a Texas Longhorn is simply not made by measuring the horns. There are numerous cattle in this industry that measure 75-80" tip-to-tip, but are these actually the best of the breed? Without a doubt some of these are good animals. However, many of them have sold for record prices, been flushed in ET (embryo transfer) and cloned only because of their record setting horn length. In some cases these cattle have poor conformation, genetic defects such as wry noses, jaw and mouth defects and bad udders with large teats and they can't even raise a calf. In my opinion some of these cattle with huge horns with an extremely large base do not show enough Longhorn traits but rather traits that are more commonly found in another long horned breed of cattle called the Watasi. However this is a whole other subject for another article and we'll save that for a later date.

If you were to check the production records (which I have) of several of these cattle you would find that in most instances they have produced mostly roper calves. At prices of \$50,000 to

\$100,000 it takes more ropers at \$350 each than she can produce in a lifetime to pay for this “great” cow. That is without figuring in her annual upkeep and care. Several of the cows in the 75-80” club cannot even nurse their own calves; some are raised by a nurse cow or produced by ET because the cow cannot carry and raise her own calf. I always check the production records of any animal that I am considering purchasing unless it is a heifer - in that case I check her mother’s production history.

Many of the 75-80” horned animals in today’s industry are truly one of a kind; some have full siblings that do not come close to having the same horn measurements as they do. There is a cow in our industry that measures over 80 inches, yet her full sister only measures in the mid-50’s tip-to-tip. Their dam was an average cow with good horn and their sire never produced another animal that has reached 75-80” (most are in the 60’s). Therefore in my opinion these are not proven, predictable genetics. I was at a recent Longhorn sale where a four year old cow with almost 70 inches sold for \$10,000. She was unexposed and by the looks of her udder, teats, shoulders and vulva she had never calved. She looked “steery”. In my opinion someone bought themselves a costly lesson. You can have the longest horned cow in the breed but if she is not producing then all you have is a “glorified steer”. No offense to trophy steers.



Production is one of the keys to selecting a top quality Longhorn female. Here is a picture (to left) of a nice solid cow that had good horn (48-50”) for her day yet she produced many daughters that had 55-60” horns. One of them

was one of the industry’s first 60” horned cows Delta Diamond (see photo right), who did eventually reach 70”. Today some breeders would not even glance at this cow (shown above) in a sale or in the pasture because she is not loaded with horn, yet she produced great horns. The term is ‘she out produced herself’. There has been numerous cows in the Longhorn Breed that have produced several offspring with 65-80” when the cow herself only measured in the 50-60” range. Most of

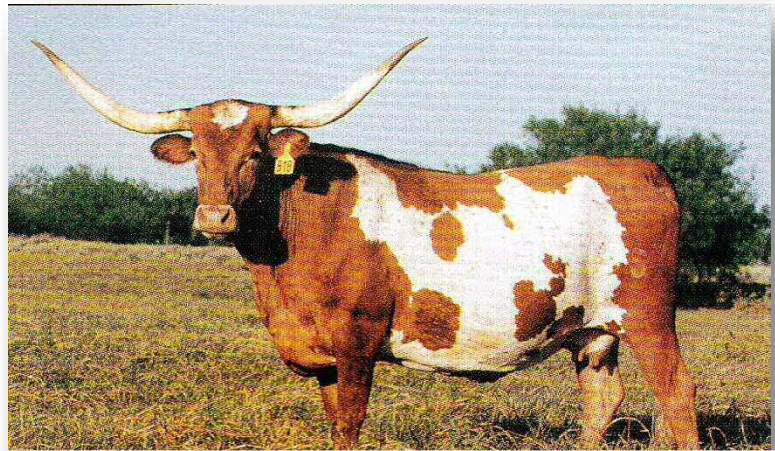




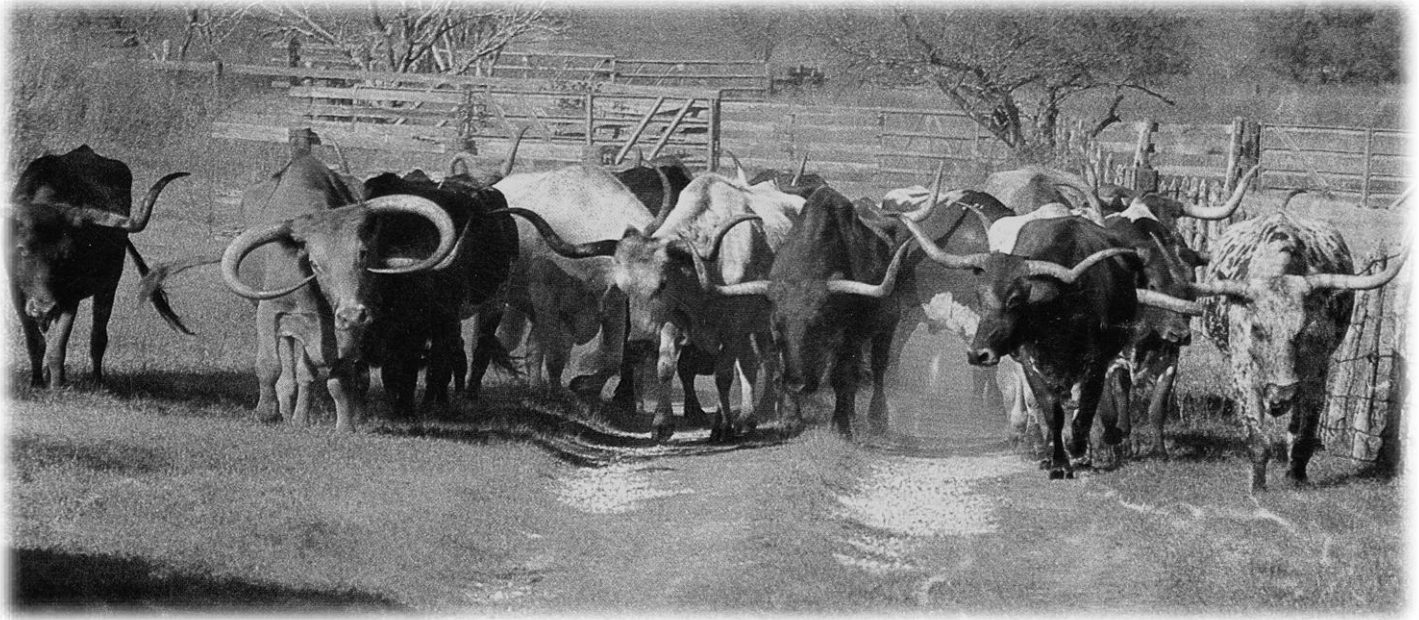
This cow measured almost 80". Her dam only 50" & her sire

the 65-80" horn cattle in our industry are sired by bulls with 50-60" horns and most of these bulls have done this more than once or twice. Phenomenon measured a little over 60" and is one of the leading sires and grandsires of 65-80" horn animals. His sire Superior measured 50" and shows up as sire or grandsire of numerous animals that are in that 70-80" Club. Proven Genetics are one of the keys to long term success in this industry.

In summary if you are going to breed for horns remember to keep all the Longhorn traits in mind when making your cattle selections. Also, if you are just getting started in the Longhorn business or you do not have a budget that will allow you to purchase the longest horn animals, do not get discouraged. There are animals out there that may not have the longest horns, but they have the genetics for producing horn. If you study the pedigrees you can make a wise and affordable purchase that someday just might produce you a 70-80" horn animal that you can sell for a top price.



This cow at maturity measured almost 80". Her dam had 48" & her sire had 60"



## **Buying Cattle at Auction vs. Private Treaty**

*Is it better to purchase cattle at an auction sale or private treaty?*

We are going to take a look at the pros and cons of these methods when purchasing cattle for your breeding program. Let's talk about auction sales first. What is the definition of an auction? An **Auction** *is an occasion for selling things to the highest bidder. It is a public occasion when things are sold to the people who offer the most money for them.* It seems that in today's Longhorn industry most cattle are bought and sold at auctions. In the spring there seems to be an auction every weekend. Auctions are a simple and fast way for a seller to sell cattle.

### **What are some of the positive reasons for purchasing at an auction?**

- 1) With consignment sales there is usually a larger variety of genetics or pedigrees available at an auction.
- 2) These different genetics from numerous breeding programs are available in one location.
- 3) At ethically run sales, you know what the true market value of the cattle are on that particular day by what the buying public is willing to pay for those cattle.
  - a. There have been sales where this is not always the case. At some sales a floor or minimum has been set by the sale promoter to keep the sale average higher. They do not let the buyers set the market price for the sale.
  - b. There have been other sales where the crowd attendance has not been good and bidding has been low which has allowed buyers to purchase cattle at below market prices.
- 4) Making purchases at a sale where the buyer's name is called out can be good publicity for your breeding program. You might even get your photo published in one of the breed magazines.
- 5) Attending a sale is also a social event and a good way to meet other breeders.
- 6) Most sales require that all cattle have health papers, so you can be somewhat assured that the cattle are healthy.



## What are some of the reasons for not buying or for being cautious when buying at an auction?

- 1) Always remember that the animal is being offered for a reason.
  - a. Ask yourself “why is this animal being sold?” Is this animal in the sale because it has a defect such as poor fertility, bad udder, poor quality offspring or bad habits. Have you seen this animal in several different sales within the last year? Repeat sale appearances could mean there is a problem with the animal.
  - b. The animal could be in the sale simply because the seller is overstocked, is short on pasture/hay or has kept offspring out of this animal.

*But how do you know which of these is the case. You must be observant when looking at the animal, ask questions of the seller if they are available and check production records.*

- 2) You have to make a buying decision in a matter of a few seconds before the auctioneer slams the gavel and says “sold”.
- 3) You can get caught up in the bidding and end up over spending.
- 4) The consignor will need a higher sale price for the animal due to their added expenses, high consignment fees and commissions that are charged by most sales.
- 5) You should always be aware of who you are bidding against. In some cases it might be a friend or someone who has been instructed to run the bidding up to the price the seller wants for that animal.
- 6) At some sales a floor or minimum has been set by the sale promoter to keep the sale average higher. Sales have the right to do this, but the floor prices should be announced before the sale. This is not always done and it creates a problem for you as a buyer, because you won’t know the true *market value* of the cattle. **Market Value:** *the amount that a seller could expect to obtain for property or goods sold on the open market.*
- 7) Sometimes you can end up traveling to a sale only to have all the cattle you are interested in sell for prices that are out of your price range. You still have the travel expense, but no cattle to show for it.

Now let’s take a look at some of the aspects, both positive and negative, of purchasing cattle by “private treaty”. **Private Treaty** *is the sale of property according to terms negotiated between the buyer and seller.* This method of selling and purchasing cattle generally only involves the seller and the buyer. There is no auctioneer, ringmen, multiple buyers or sale Management Company involved in this type of sale. It is more of a one-on-one approach.

## What are some of the negative reasons for purchasing cattle by Private Treaty?

- 1) May require a great deal of traveling in order to acquire different genetics that you are interested in adding to your program.
- 2) As a prospective buyer you may feel pressured by some sellers to make a purchase. Most breeders will be happy to show you their cattle and program without pressuring you to make a purchase.
- 3) The price is set by the seller and it may or may not reflect the market value of the animal. In other words, if you plan on reselling the animal shortly after you have purchased it, you may or may not get your money back out of the animal. When you consider the price, you need to decide if you are willing to pay that amount to have the animal in your herd. Is the animal worth it to you? It’s that simple.
- 4) You will probably receive little to no public recognition of your purchases unless the seller places a “thank you” ad in a breed magazine. This could be considered a pro or a con depending on the buyer’s perspective.

## **What are some of the positive reasons for purchasing cattle by Private Treaty?**

- 1) This is a more personal way of buying cattle. The buyer and the seller are able to develop a personal relationship.
- 2) Buyers are able to view cattle in their natural state, in the pasture.
- 3) Sellers do not always offer their best cattle at auctions, but will price them and offer them at private treaty.
- 4) The buyer is able to get an overview of the seller's breeding program and their management practices.
- 5) You are able to ask questions of the seller.
- 6) In most cases you will be able to view animals that are related to the animal you are looking at purchasing such as offspring, sire, dam and siblings.
- 7) You do not have to make a buying decision in only a few seconds, you can take your time.
- 8) Most breeders will be happy to show you their cattle without pressuring you to buy cattle. They just enjoy showing their cattle to folks who have an interest in the breed.
- 9) Some breeders offer discounts or package deals on multiple purchases.
- 10) When you contact a breeder about coming to view their cattle you can also ask about their prices. This will let you know if the trip could result in you making a purchase before you spend the money to travel to the breeder's ranch.

In the thirty years that I have been involved in the Longhorn industry I have purchased cattle at auctions and by private treaty. I have found that in most cases I have been happier and more profitable with the cattle I purchased by private treaty. I have also developed long lasting relationships with the breeders I have purchased cattle from by private treaty. I'm not saying that all my purchases at auctions have been unprofitable or that I was unhappy with all of them. I just feel I came out a little better on my private treaty purchases. If you are building a Longhorn herd I would recommend that you give some serious thought to not only purchasing cattle at auctions but also taking advantage of the private treaty method of purchasing cattle. You do have options.

# Selecting Sires for Horns and More

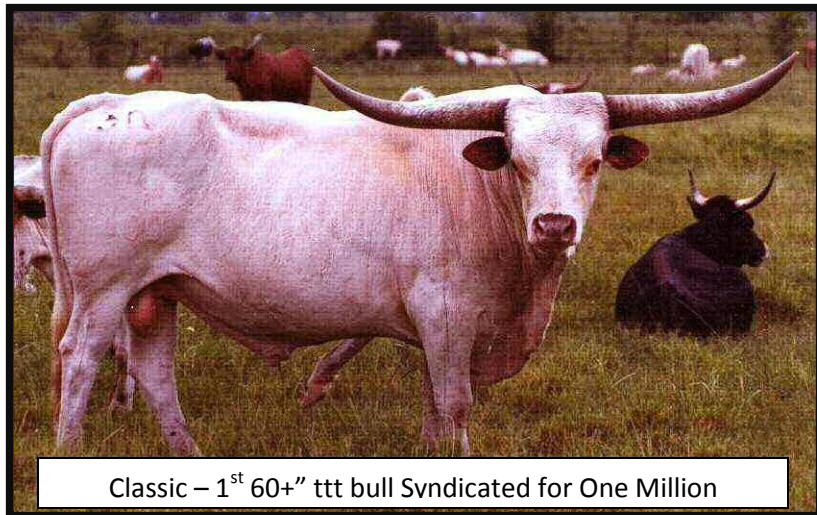
By Russell Hooks



Measles Super Ranger sold for \$105,000

In an earlier article we discussed selecting for more than just horn in Longhorn females. Now let's talk about Longhorn bulls. Some breeders think the tape measure is the answer to selecting the best bull. Once again that is not the case. There are numerous bulls in the industry that are in the 70" horn club; they are the "hot sires" of the day. These young bulls have tons of horn and you cannot open up a Longhorn magazine without seeing an ad about one of these "great sires". But what *actually* makes a great sire?

PRODUCTION! CONSISTENCY! PREDICTABLE GENETICS! Most of these hot ticket sires are so young that their only offspring are still babies. Before I load my program (and the programs I consult for) down with these "popular and highly promoted genetics" I want to see some mature offspring. Will some of these "hot sires" of today make a lasting positive mark on the industry? Yes they will, but history has shown us that the percentage is very small. I have seen too many "fad bulls" come and go in this industry during my thirty years in Longhorns. As breeders, we need to develop a breeding plan that utilizes proven genetics instead of chasing fads. If you chase the fads you will more than likely always find yourself one step behind. Think about it, bull X is the bull of the moment – the one everyone is talking about. You AI your cows to him, it takes about 1-2 months to AI the cows, then nine months for the calves to hit the ground and they turn out pretty nice. Now six to seven months



Classic – 1<sup>st</sup> 60+” ttt bull Syndicated for One Million

later the calves are weaning age; you could sell some of them now but we all know that weanlings do not sell as well as two year olds. So you hold these calves until they are twenty four months old. The time frame is a total of approximately 35 months and the chances are good that by then there is another “hot ticket” bull. You have missed that small window of market opportunity. I have observed that most of the “fad” bulls are only able to ride that popularity trailer for about 3-4 years and then they start to lose traction. This is usually about the time their offspring are reaching maturity and they can now be fully evaluated on traits such as long term horn growth, fertility and milking ability. I have seen “super sires” that have put offspring on the ground that show rapid early horn growth, but when they reach three to four years of age it slows dramatically and other sires’ calves that were showing less horn growth at a young age have caught up with the “super” sires’ calves. In some cases the “super” sire is inconsistent in his offspring, some have great horn and some are average or even below average. Now the “super” sire’s offspring are no different than any other good sire. When you are searching for a sire always ask yourself “how will his genetics benefit my herd, is it just his popularity I am interested in or can he help improve the overall quality of my herd in the long term”.

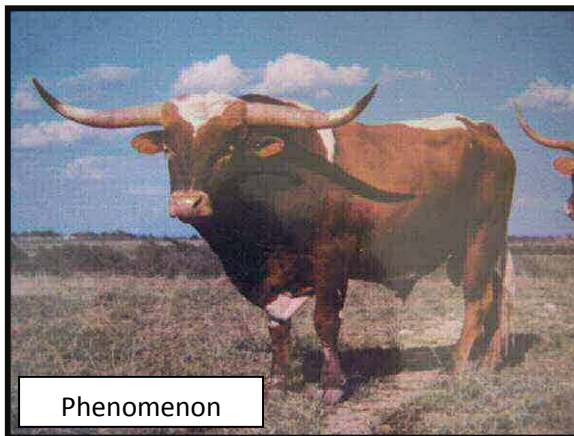
When you are selecting a sire for AI or natural service there are several things to keep in mind. The first thing I look at is a sire’s overall conformation, frame size and breed characteristics. Then I want to see what his dam and maternal grand dam look like. Years ago legendary Longhorn breeder J.W. Isaacs told me that “you better like the dam and grand dam of your herd sire because more than likely that is what his heifers are going to look like”. I have found this to be the case more often than not. Not only are his daughters going to look similar to the females in his pedigree, but they will inherit a lot of their traits such as udder and teat size, fertility and femininity. While checking these female lines of a sire’s pedigree, I will study the pedigree several generations back looking for as many great females as possible in the sire’s pedigree. Next I look at what other good animals, both males and females have come from these genetics or similar genetics. After I have studied the prospective sire’s pedigree I will then compare it with the pedigrees of the females that he will be mated to in order to check to see if there will be too much line breeding or inbreeding in the resulting offspring. I also look to see if the genetics of the prospective sire have been used with the female genetics that I am planning to mate him with. In other words, have these genetics worked together successfully or unsuccessfully in past matings for other breeders. It is more productive and less costly to learn from what has or has not worked in the past. One last important step is to visually inspect the females and note their faults...poor frame score, poor conformation, poor horn growth, etc. This is done so that you can select a sire that will help improve these weaknesses in your cow herd.

The selection of a herd sire is a very important part of a seed stock breeding program. It is correctly said that the sire has a genetic impact on 50% of every calf he sires. So basically, he is 50% of your herd. However, if you think a little more about it, the impact of a sire is even greater than 50%. He only has a 50% effect on your herd through each calf crop. If you don’t retain any of his offspring then his effect ends there. If you retain his heifers he is 50% of them



and 25% of their offspring; so if you retain these calves he is now 75% of your herd. The effect goes on and on if you are keeping heifers and bulls from your own herd as replacements. As you can see, the selection of a herd sire can have a major long term impact, good or bad, on your herd. Take the time and effort to study all prospective sires before adding their genetics to your herd. It will save you time and money in the long run.

I have often wondered why breeders in our industry will purchase a cow for a large sum of money, but when it comes to purchasing a bull the philosophy seems to be the cheaper the better. This is the opposite of what it should be and of what happens in other cattle breeds. As I stated earlier the females are important and especially the dams of your herd sires, but it is the sires that have a larger impact on your herd and at a faster rate. A breeder should consider spending the largest portion of his purchasing budget on his herd sire. It takes only a short time for that investment to payoff. The late Gene Day used this example when I was looking at purchasing a top notch two year old herd sire prospect from him that he had priced at \$10,000. He said "you are going to take this young bull and breed him to 30-40 head this first year. If he produces only ropers and you sell 40 ropers for \$250 to \$300 each...that's \$10,000 to \$12,000...the bull is paid for. Now let's say he turns out to be as good of a herd sire as you thought so you only have 20 ropers to sell (\$6,000) and you're going to have 20 heifers that should be worth \$800 to \$1,200 at weaning. Some of these you're not going to want to sell, but keep as replacements. Now he is not only paying for himself, he's making you money." I have never forgotten these words of wisdom and I think about them every time I look at purchasing a bull regardless of whether the price is \$1,000 or \$100,000. The money invested in a good herd sire is money well spent and will pay off in the long term.



A lot of the 65-80" horn cattle in our industry are sired by bulls with 50-60" horns and most of these bulls have done this more than once or twice. Phenomenon measured a little over 60" and is one of the leading sires and grandsires of 65-80" horn animals. His sire Superior measured 50" and shows up as sire or grandsire of numerous animals that are in that 70-80" Club. Proven genetics are one of the keys to long term success in this industry. There have been sires in our industry that consistently out produce themselves in horn and

conformation. However there are just as many or more that are very much hit and miss in their offspring quality. There are some sires that never produce an offspring better than they are and in some cases even equal to that sire.

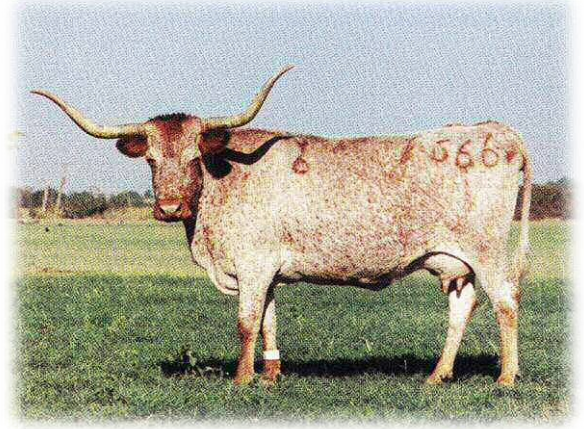
The point behind all this is, it is best to stick with proven genetics from bloodlines that have passed the test of time and invest wisely in your herd sires. If you are going to use an unproven bull make sure he comes from predictable and proven genetics. Do your homework and do not take sire selection lightly. Work towards producing offspring that are a total package of proven genetics: good horns (55-70")



Superior – a bull know for out producing himself in horn and conformation

with shape and style, correct and functional conformation, milking ability, adequate body size and eye appeal. It will make you more money in the long run.

# Longhorn Cattle and Seed Stock Production



## ***Are you a Seed Stock Producer?***

If you raise registered/pure bred cattle the answer is YES.

## ***What does it mean to be a Seed Stock Producer?***

- A Seed stock Producer is someone who is a producer of breeding stock for purebred and commercial breeders/buyers.
- To produce superior quality animals that encompasses all the best traits of that breed. In most cases these traits are of value to breeders of other breeders of cattle for cross breeding or in an F1 Cross program.

## ***What is the purpose of producing Seed Stock Cattle?***

- The goal or purpose for producing a particular pure bred/registered breed should be to produce cattle that have just as great a value to the commercial cattleman as they do to another fellow registered breeder.
- To raise purebred (aka registered) or genetically superior cattle to be used for breeding purposes by other seed stock producers and other cattle producers. The calf's original intent is to be raised to be sold for breeding at a cow-calf ranch, but they may also be sent to meat production.

## ***Who buys Seed Stock cattle?***

The production from these registered cattle is sold/marketed to commercial cattlemen as seed stock. The goal of the registered cattle breeder is not to just sale to another registered seed stock producer so they can in turn sale to another seed stock producer and so on. Their goal is to produce cattle that have just as great a value to the commercial cattleman as they do to another fellow registered breeder.

- 1) Commercial Cattle producers are the number one purchasers of Seed stock bulls and females. They want to utilize the superior genetics of a particular breed for cross breeding in order to produce an animal with Hybrid Vigor.
- 2) Other Seed stock Producers
- 3) Hobbyist Ranchers



## ***What has allowed other breeders of registered Seed Stock to survive and thrive?***

*Answer:* The producers and the breed associations understand what it means to be a seed stock producer. The breed must prove it's self to be useful and viable outside of their own breed. A limited niche or hobbyist market can only provide limited success. F1Crosses are one of the main Keys to the long term Survival for Seed stock Producers. The Brahman breed is a leading example.



## Brahman Cattle

They are called the “*Queen of Cattle Country*”

Because of these genetic traits...

*Size:* They are intermediate in size among beef breeds.

*Birth Weights:* 60-65 lbs.

*Disposition:* They are considered intelligent, inquisitive and shy. They quickly respond to the handling that they receive, good or bad.

*Adaptable:* They are thrifty, hardy and adaptable to wide range of feeds and climates.

*Heat Tolerance:* They show little effect from temperatures up to and beyond 105 degrees.

*Skin Pigmentation:* Helps protect from sun's rays and prevents cancer eye.

The goal of all pure bred/registered breeds should be to produce cattle that have just as great a value to the commercial cattleman as they do to another fellow registered breeder. A classic example of this can be seen with registered Brahman cattle. Brahman cattle are greatly utilized in F1 Cross breeding programs. Cattlemen will pay a premium for Certified F1 Braford (Brahman X Hereford) and Certified Black Gold females (Brahman X Angus = F1 Brangus). *They have established that they have value outside of their own breed.* These factors have been a key to the survival of the Brahman breed by increasing the profitability in raising registered seed stock Brahmans and by helping other breeds to be more profitable by creating F1 crosses. The Brahman Association has also stepped into help promote and market the crosses that are produced from Brahman cattle. Brahman cattle have been found to fill a unique place in American cattle production. The Brahman and cattle carrying percentages of Brahman breeding have been found extremely useful in the southern coastal area of the United States, where they have demonstrated their ability to withstand hot and humid weather and to resist insects. In more recent years Brahman cattle have spread considerably from their initial locations and are now found widely through the United States. They are also good mothers and produce a very satisfactory milk flow under conditions that are adverse for best performance of the European breeds. Cancer eye is almost unknown in the breed.

### Breeds with Brahman blood:

Braford Cattle are  $\frac{3}{8}$  **Brahman** &  $\frac{5}{8}$  Hereford

Brahmousin cattle are  $\frac{3}{8}$  **Brahman** &  $\frac{5}{8}$  Limousin

Brangus cattle are  $\frac{3}{8}$  **Brahman** &  $\frac{5}{8}$  Angus

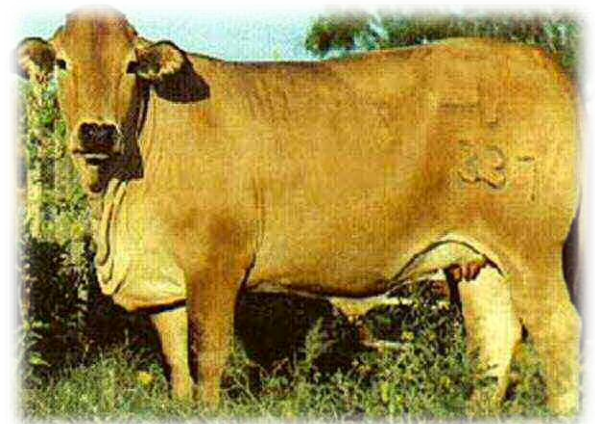
*Santa Gertrudis* cattle are approximately five-eighths Shorthorn and three-eighths **Brahman**.

*Simbrah* cattle are a cross between **Brahman** and Simmental

*Charbray* cattle are  $\frac{5}{8}$  Charolais and  $\frac{3}{8}$  **Brahman**.

*Beefmaster* cattle have **Brahman** influence. Today's modern Beefmaster have slightly less than one-half **Brahman** blood and slightly more than one-fourth of Hereford and Shorthorn breeding.

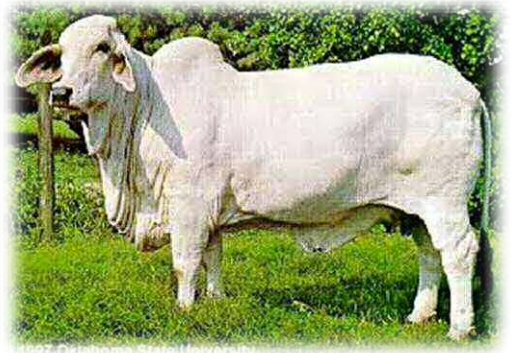
*Red Brangus* cattle are  $\frac{3}{8}$  **Brahman** &  $\frac{5}{8}$  Angus





## *Brahman Cattle “Queen of Cattle Country” Really?*

**Why aren't Longhorns “Queen of Cattle Country”?**  
Longhorn cattle offer some of the same “**profit making genetics**” as the Brahman cattle but with several plus.....

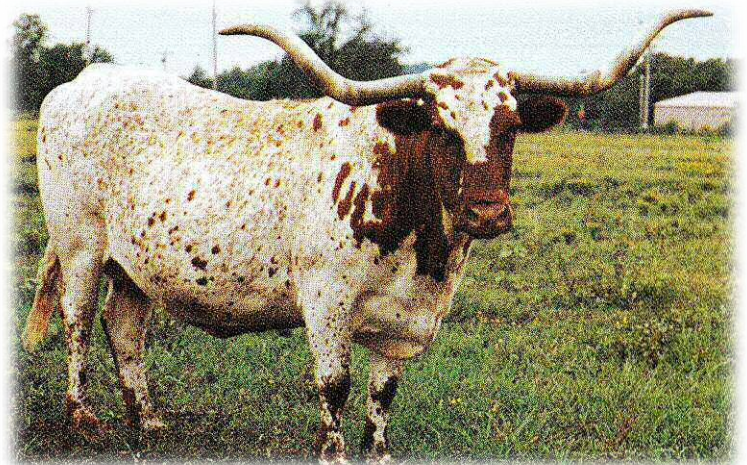


Now let's take a look at the Texas Longhorn Breed. The Texas Longhorn breed has a lot to offer the commercial cattleman but our association and we as breeders have done a poor job of getting the word out about the true value of our cattle. When you speak with most commercial cattlemen about Longhorns they are quick to turn up their noses or shake their heads and say “those scrubby little things are all horn and no meat, their worthless.” We all know that is not the case but perception is reality and we have to change that as we move our breed forward in the years to come. Now is the time that we need to start making the “profit making genetics” of the Texas Longhorn known to the commercial cattlemen and ranchers. With the depopulation of the US cattle herd due to the savoir drought which has plagued a large portion of the US's ranching land now is the time for our association to start educating cattlemen about the benefits of using Longhorn genetics as they rebuild their herds. Longhorns can offer cattlemen the most affordable and efficient way to rebuild their ranching operation.

## **Texas Longhorn Cattle**

### **PROFIT MAKING GENETICS**

- Early maturity
- Fertility
- Calving Easy
- Longevity
- Forage Utilization
- Disease Resistance
- Parasite Resistance
- Adaptability to all climates



Dr. Stewart Fowler, PhD professor of animal science calls the Longhorn a “**Survivor of the Past - Bright Promise for the Future**”

Dr. Fowler stated that “By utilizing the Texas Longhorn's unique genetic potential, several of the physical and economic problems confronting the rancher and feeder can be solved or greatly eased. This genetic potential includes genes for high fertility, easy calving, disease and parasite resistance, hardiness, longevity, and the ability to utilize the browse and coarse forage material on marginal rangelands more efficiently than most other cattle breeds. Under the harsh environmental conditions of many areas of North America, the existence of these traits, which have been strongly fixed by nature's culling in the Texas Longhorn, spell the difference between a comfortable profit and the cattle enterprise becoming a "story written in red ink!”

## High Fertility

- Dr. Fowler “High fertility is the most important economic trait in the beef industry. Without a live calf with which to work, all other traits are purely academic! Unfortunately, many of the European breeds of beef cattle are not noted for high fertility, and several are plagued with real difficulties at calving. During a long period of survival of the fittest, however, a Texas Longhorn strain evolved which virtually assures that every healthy cow will present a new addition to the herd each year. This extremely high fertility, which is built into the Longhorn, could perhaps boost the low calf crop percentage found in many beef herds.”

## Genetic Goldmine

- Dr. Fowler “After seven years of closely observing and studying Texas Longhorns, I am convinced that these cattle may prove to be a real genetic goldmine. Preserving the Texas Longhorn has maintained a substantial amount of unique biological variation which was accumulated over some 400 years in these nature-made cattle. This genetic goldmine provides insurance against genetic erosion that stems from genetic uniformity in our modern cattle breeds. Such genetic erosion could make it almost impossible for cattlemen of today and tomorrow to meet emerging new needs. The reservoir of unique genes of the Texas Longhorn can provide some of the genetic variation and flexibility needed to meet the emerging and future needs of the beef industry. At the same time, the Texas Longhorn maintains genetic diversity capable of maximizing hybrid vigor for man's current needs.”
- Dr. Fowler “Thus, the reservoir of genetic material in the Texas Longhorn represents a valuable natural resource. This genetic reservoir grows more valuable as our rapidly-changing economy forces new needs, handicaps, and demands on our cattle industry. It becomes increasingly valuable as our human population bites off increasing amounts of our more productive land, as our grain supply moves into international trade, and as farm and ranch labor becomes less available. This is why the Texas Longhorn is rapidly becoming "the old breed with the new future." (information from numerous articles and papers by Dr. Stewart Fowler, PhD)

## Combine **Profit Making Genetics** of Longhorns with...

**Angus, Limousin, Charolais, Brangus, Gelbvieh, or Saler**

## What type of Longhorn cow to use in cross breeding?

- You have to start with the right kind of Longhorn. More attention will have to be paid to size, capacity, frame, structural correctness and udder soundness of the foundation cows.
- They need the size, capacity and frame in order to produce a calf with adequate size.
- Sound udders are a must in order to raise a fat and health calf.

All the above should be considered on any cow but is sometimes over looked because of single trait selection for such traits as horn length or horn base.

## Why cross different purebred breeds of cattle?

- By crossing different purebred breeds it is possible to produce an animal that has the best traits from both parents. This is known as **Hybrid Vigor**. This first generation cross is called an F1 Cross.



## ***What is Hybrid Vigor?***

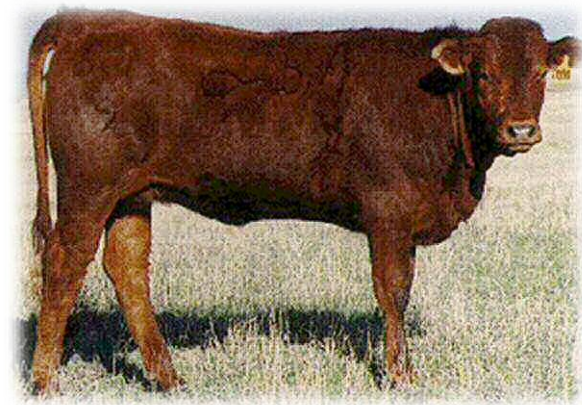
- Increased vigor or other superior qualities arising from the crossbreeding of genetically different plants or animals. Also called *heterosis*.
- The increased vigor or general health, resistance to disease, and other superior qualities that are often manifested in hybrid organisms, especially plants and animals.
- (Genetics) the tendency of a crossbred organism to have qualities superior to those of either parent.

## ***Did you know that there are only four breeds that have Longhorns as the base breed?***

- Salorn (has its own Association)
- Geltex
- Texon (has its own Association)
- All Cattle

## **Salorn**

The Salorn creation program **began with registered Texas Longhorn females** carrying the genetic traits of adaptability. Superior full blood, smooth-coated, muscular Salers sires, selected for gentle disposition, have been mated to these cows. The resulting F1's (1/2 Salers - 1/2 **Longhorn**) are bred to 3/4 Salers - 1/4 **Longhorn**



to produce a 5/8 - 3/8 result, which is the First Generation Salorn. Successive generations of the 5/8 - 3/8 Salorn will insure breeding consistency. **The Lean Beef Answer!** "Salorn" is a composite breed consisting of 5/8 French Salers and 3/8 **Texas Longhorn blood**. This combination of genetics utilizes the most adaptable breed of cattle in America - the Texas Longhorn - with the most proven carcass quality breed - the Salers.

The late professor Jan C. Bonsma, world renowned animal scientist of Pretoria, South Africa, and consultant to the International Salorn Association, stated, "It is my considered opinion that if the breed creation work on the Salorn is

judiciously done, the Salorn breed will, in the long run, be a far superior breed to any of the synthetic breeds of America."

## **Geltex**

Dr. Gillespie "I got involved in the Geltex breed last year (1988) because I felt that the idea was in line with new developments within the beef industry. The industry as a whole is trying to take advantage of the attributes of different breeds and combine those with the hybrid vigor that comes from cross breeding. We looked at this and felt we needed to find out if there wasn't some profitability in using Longhorns in crosses. The basic 'operational premise' that we went with was the feeling that Longhorns might create a real advantage, especially on the female side, combining the characteristics of the Longhorn, such as high fertility, longevity and good mothering instincts, with the growthy tendencies of the Gelbvieh.

## **Texon**

The TEXON is being genetically engineered to combine the grass utilization of the Devon with the browsing ability of the **Texas Longhorn** and the marbling of the Devon with the leanness and favorable unsaturated fatty acids of **Texas Longhorn** beef. Traits common to both breeds include: high fertility, calving ease, climatic adaptation, and longevity. It is hoped to add a bit of disease and parasite resistance from the Texas Longhorn and good milk production of the Devon. The TEXON is a composite breed evolving from a blend of the genetics of the historic **Texas Longhorn** and the ancient Devon. The breeding objective is to combine the

desirable unique traits of these historically old breeds into a new breed that is better adapted to specific environmental and economic conditions. The Texas Longhorn was "Made in America" by Nature over a 500-year period; and the Devon, "The Beef Breed Supreme at Grass," was introduced to America from England in 1623! **Building the Texon Breed:** The Texon project was initiated in 1989 and is utilizing reciprocal crosses to exploit the fullest genetic diversity from both breeds. The F-1 (first-cross) is not a TEXON; it is a crossbred which possesses great genetic variability. Several breeding routes are being explored (backcrosses, F-2s, etc.). To "fix" the desired traits and to increase the homozygosity (purity) of the desired gene pairs, selection and exploratory matings will be followed by mild inbreeding and/or linebreeding. As an aid to sound selection foundation animals are being evaluated through feedlots and packing plants; and some bulls are being put through forage bull tests.

## Angus + Limousin + Longhorn = ALL Cattle

ALL Cattle are comprised of 1/4 Limousin, 1/4 Longhorn and 2/4 Angus

# Longhorns In The Feed Yard

From an interview with Longhorn Producer and Feed Yard Owner/Operator Richard Crist

TLJ: But this pen was a higher percentage Limousin than it was Longhorn. Which breed gets credit for which results?

CRIST: The Limousin is noted for its high yield of red meat. They have very bulgy, muscular rounds, are very wide across the loin-eye, but a low percentage of them grade choice. More of them grade good. The plus in this Excel muscle' scoring is attributed to the Limousin. *But the higher quality grade I would have to say comes from crossing them with the Longhorn breed.* The longhorn is an earlier maturing animal. Heifers and bulls reach puberty at a much earlier age than the Limousin. The bigger the frame of the animal, the later they mature because they are still growing and it's taking so much of the energy they get from their feed just to grow. The early maturing of the longhorn means that the carcass will lay down fat sooner, so in this group of heifers, the 63 percent choice grade had to help the Limousin. Had these been straight Limousin and I had fed them only 119 days I'm sure the choice would have been somewhere down in the upper 40 to low 50 percents. *So this was an ideal mix.*

TLJ: Are you saying that Longhorns do have a place in the feed yard?

CRIST: They certainly do have. *In a crossbreeding program the Longhorn has tremendous commercial potential.* But you have to start with the right kind of Longhorn. It can be done in the traditional way. More attention will have to be paid to size and capacity and frame of the foundation cows. But if you're going to use Longhorns to start a commercial herd, and you're not particular about the size frame of the animals, I couldn't recommend it, even though they grade well and have good yield grade. Because if the animals haven't got the size the packers don't want them.



**Introduction:** *This article was written sixteen years ago but in my opinion it still rings true today. These are some very thought provoking questions and statements that we as breeders should be giving a lot of thought to. Our breed association could also benefit from thinking about the answers to these questions. Our market appears to be extremely strong but in my opinion the reality is that it is only good with room for improvement to help insure that it stays good. I have been in the Longhorn industry for over thirty years and I have*

*seen our cattle prices rise to these extreme highs before to only have the bubble burst and prices plunge to below commercial cattle prices. It took many years before we saw the market recover and prices climb to a sustainable level. It is my opinion that all true Longhorn Breeders should be focusing on the long-term success and promotion of the breed rather than **blindly chasing the longest tip-to-tip horn measurements**. Our breed has more than one marketable-saleable trait and it is time that we start to focus on those traits to insure the success of the Texas Longhorn Breed.*

## What Makes a Breed Succeed?

By Stewart H. Fowler  
June 1987

Did you ever wonder how or what makes a breed like the Texas Longhorn succeed? I certainly have; in fact, I have given a lot of thought to that intriguing question. We have seen a tremendous array of beef cattle breeds in the United States during my lifetime. Some breeds succeed and earn a permanent niche in our beef industry; others seem to merely hang on; while others falter, fail and practically disappear from the American livestock scene. This has fascinated me over my forty years of active work in the livestock field. No doubt, each of us could compile an impressive list of items related to the success of a breed. I would like to share my list of thirteen considerations with you.

*First*, if a breed is to truly succeed on a **long-term economic basis**, it must possess one or more unique traits that are needed by the commercial beef industry. It must be more than just a “me too” breed! It must differ some in economically important traits than the rest of the breeds. Otherwise, why bother to consider it if there are a dozen other breeds that can do the same thing? At Berry College in northwest Georgia, we maintain registered herds of seven beef breeds: Angus, Brahman, Brangus, Chianina, Devon, Simmental and Texas Longhorn. Visitors to the campus sometimes voice the opinion that some of these varied breeds must have been selected because of fad or fancy! Each of the breeds, however, was selected specifically because our crystal ball tells me that they possess certain traits that will be needed to meet the demands and emerging changes in our beef industry. For example, the Texas Longhorn was selected for its high fertility, browsing ability and lean meat production. Doesn’t it make good sense that private breeders should place considerable emphasis on unique economically important traits also?

*Secondly*, to fully succeed a breed should be loaded with traits needed by the commercial beef industry. In my inventory of such economically important traits are: fertility, calving ease, calf survivability, milking ability, temperament, conformation (beef where beef counts), maximum lean meat, carcass quality, hardiness (including heat and parasite resistance for the South), disease resistance, longevity, rustling ability, fast rate of gain and efficiency of feed conversion. This list reads almost like an inventory of traits of the Texas Longhorn breed! How does your “breed of choice” rate on these traits? How many of these traits can it contribute as complementary traits in a crossbreeding program?

An important *third* factor would be for the breed to have a genetic make-up pure enough (genetic stability) to pass the desired traits to their offspring. If a breeder wants to help his breed succeed, he must make sure that the performance of the cattle that he offers for sale as seed stock is due to additive genes and not to heterosis or hybrid vigor. In other words, the cattle must possess purity (homozygosity) in their desired genes. Breed purity will help maximize the returns from crossbreeding.

As a *fourth* criteria for success, a breed must meet trends (present and anticipated) in the beef industry. In other words, it will be essential that the breed can be used to produce cattle that will have the greatest advantage throughout the production, feeding, processing and merchandising system. Admittedly, it is difficult to plan today’s production for tomorrow’s markets! However, I strongly believe that there are two “demands” that a breed must be ready to meet. First, my personal crystal ball tells me that the stress will be on cattle that will utilize pastures, rangeland, forage, crop residues and by-products most effectively and efficiently. Texas Longhorns score high on this point! Second, most everyone’s crystal ball should now tell them that our cattle must produce a maximum of low calorie lean meat, preferably with quality bred in for juiciness and palatability. This would mean a breed must transmit lots of lean muscle with a minimum of subcutaneous and intermuscular fat but with a modest amount of intramuscular fat (marbling) for flavor and juiciness. This second trend is readily apparent with the increased merchandising of lower calorie beef under such labels as “Longhorn Lean” and “Key-lite”. For the foreseeable future, our breeds must fill the role of efficiently producing the maximum muscle with a minimum of marbling included to assure quality.

As a *fifth* consideration, it is important that breeders not get **“hung up” on a single trait selection** – like for size alone. Granted, such selection will give the most rapid rate of genetic change *in that one trait*. However, it is important that a balance be kept among economically important traits if a breed is to make the greatest genetic contributions to the profitability of our total beef industry. Unfortunately, some breeds have glorified frame size to the extent that such economically important traits as reproductive efficiency and mothering ability have been almost completely overlooked.

As a *sixth* point, ***if breeders want to help their breeds succeed, they must void chasing fads! Some breeds have been seriously handicapped by breeders placing too much emphasis on a fancy or non-economically important trait.*** Let me draw upon the sheep industry to illustrate this point. At one time Shropshire breeders were breeding for maximum wool coverage on their animals. They like to advertise “wooled from their nose to their toes!” They were so successful in putting wool over the entire face that many animals became practically wool blind. It took quite a while for progressive breeders to undo this mistake. This delay in genetic progress permitted other sheep breeds to surge to the front. Cattle breeds are not immune to such an error by their breeders. Too rigid color restrictions for registration are one example. ***Texas Longhorn breeders can do the same thing also as they blindly chase the longest tip-to-tip horn measurements. One should pause and ask, “What does this contribute to the profitable production of beef?”*** The larger the number of traits selected for, the slower will be the progress in any one of them. Thus, the traits under selection should be the ones that are of greatest economic value which have high enough heritabilities to respond to selection pressure.

As a *seventh* consideration, it helps to have a breed represented at Land-Grant universities and other agricultural colleges, especially where the faculty understand and are thoroughly familiar with the breed. The Brahman herd at Louisiana State University and the Barzona herd at Mississippi State University are good examples. Hopefully, Texas Longhorns at Berry will become another! Among the

advantages that this offers the breed are: (1) Breed research becomes more meaningful; (2) Students become familiar with the breed, and they will be our next generation of cattlemen; and (3) When used in field days, short courses, and judging contests, a college herd becomes a good “display window” for the breed. The presence of a breed on a college campus is especially important in a relatively new marketing area for that breed. As indicated previously, Berry College has breeding herds of seven breeds of beef cattle and, in addition, is establishing small demonstration units of two additional breed – Barzona and Senepol. These breeds have created considerable interest on the part of many cattlemen throughout the Southeast, and many visitors come from outside the region. Granted, it is difficult to get a breed accepted into a Land-Grant university due to the political implications involved related to federal and state funding. It is a bit easier to get a breed accepted into a private college, such as Berry, since those colleges do not have to “play politics.” The main handicap with a private college is finding one that has adequate land, facilities, and funds to take on an additional breed.

An *eighth* item of great importance is the expertise of the breeders in producing “quality control” animals for the commercial industry. ***Remember, the purebred breeder is the “tool maker” for our multibillion dollar cattle industry.*** Accordingly, purebred breeders must intensify their efforts to produce superior breeding stock to continue meeting the exacting specifications demanded by our beef industry. For a breed to succeed, its breeders must recognize and be the first to use new selection and breeding techniques that show merit for advancing efficiency and economy of beef production.

Although I have listed it as *ninth*, the integrity of the breeders plays a more important role in the success of a breed than this late listing might indicate! A high standard of ethics and integrity on the part of its major breeders proves to be one of a breed’s very best advertisements. Remember, the purebred breeder is the guardian of the genetic material needed to advance the progress of the commercial beef producer. Every effort should be made to rid the breed of undesirable genes and to pass such genetic material on in an improved status through the use of sire summaries and by strict performance in progeny testing, judicious selection, and carefully planned corrective matings. ***It has been rightfully said that purebred breeders should exercise every effort “to sell cattle that won’t come back to breeders who will!” That’s a major ingredient of success for the breed as well as the breeder.***

A *tenth* consideration of great importance is to have the breed represented by a sound, progressive registry association. Most of the positive work done toward improving a breed’s merit will be accomplished by able, energetic, and persevering individual breeders. However, a registry association can help hold the existing merit of the breed and can help acquaint “beginners” with what is considered ideal by the majority of the breeders of that breed. Many registry associations are now giving their breeders a strong helping hand toward genetic improvement through the annual release of sire summaries, which publish the results of national sire evaluation programs.

An *eleventh* aid to help a breed succeed is to have a number of the top sires of the breed represented in the beef sire directories of artificial insemination companies like American Breeders Service; Select Sires, Inc.; and Elgin Breeding Service. The availability of semen gives added “recognition” of the breed; and if truly genetically superior bulls are included, it will accelerate genetic progress for the breed.

A *twelfth* consideration is to see that the breed is accurately represented in the USDA Farmer’s Bulletin *Beef Cattle Breeds*. If the breed is not included and a registry association exists for the breed, strong effort should be made to get it into the next revision. This publication is widely read by prospective cattlemen and by 4-H and F.F.A. members who should know about your breed as they consider the choice of a breed or breeds.

My *thirteenth* factor for success of a breed is sound merchandising – not just mere selling. ***For if a breed is to avoid the “boom and burst” syndrome, its breeders must exercise care about extreme ballyhoo, rigged bids, and “trading off” among themselves. Such practices tend to create a false image of the breed being a “plaything for the wealthy” in the minds of sound commercial cattlemen to the point that they feel that they cannot compete for the good bulls of the breed. The day is rapidly***

approaching when production records and carcass cutout values will replace showing winnings and sale prices as measures of a breed's accomplishments and success. Commercial producers will insist on seeing official performance records before purchasing purebreds of a given breed for use in their production programs whether it be grading-up or, more likely, crossbreeding.

How do these points compare with what you see in your crystal ball? I am sure that I have overlooked some that you feel are important and perhaps have included some that you feel are not significant. On some, you may totally disagree. However, if I were to single out one of the thirteen as most important, it would be my very first one: *If a breed is to truly succeed on a long-term economic basis, it must possess one or more unique traits that are needed by the commercial beef industry.* If I am partially correct, the Texas Longhorn has a long and promising economic future that will eclipse the breed's historical claim to fame!

*Source: The Longhorn Scene, June 1987.*



# Types of Cattle and Their Place in the Market

By Russell Hooks

May 2011



I have been in the Longhorn business for over 30 yrs. I have seen a lot of ups and downs in that amount of time, including the high cattle prices of the oil boom era of the early 1980's as well as the lows after the oil bust in the late 80's and early 90's. The industry went from seeing sale averages of \$3,500 and up to watching averages fall to \$600-\$1,000. Before the fall of the market, the high-selling lots at most sales were in excess of \$10,000 with several world record prices set during this time period. There were bull syndications being done on top bulls in the industry in amounts exceeding \$2 million.

When all this started coming to an end, there were several things that helped keep the industry going which included, a good market for recreational cattle (ropers) and commercial cattlemen's use of Longhorn cattle. Mainly Longhorn bulls to breed first calf heifers of other breeds. This was, in part, due to a strong national promotional advertising effort made by the association and breeders to appeal to the

commercial cattlemen about the benefits of using Longhorn genetics. A good market (\$800-\$1,200) for the solid colored Longhorn bulls was one of the results. Bull calves had value not just as ropers, but as a first calf heifer bulls. This added to the bull calf's value as a roper because there were fewer bull calves being sold as ropers. This promotional campaign also resulted in a good market for lower end cattle for use in commercial cow/calf operations. With a solid and realistic market price established for ropers, bulls, and the lower end cattle, the market for the better cattle started to slowly recover. As this started to happen, more and more people started to get involved in the Longhorn industry because they could see that the Longhorn could be as profitable or more profitable than any other registered breed of cattle or a commercial cattle operation. This renewed interest helped increase prices of Longhorn cattle at all levels of quality but it started at the bottom and worked its way up.

In recent years we have seen a dramatic rise in Longhorn cattle prices with high sale averages, but once again, we are seeing the prices start to fall drastically. These recent years have been like a flash back to the 1980's. Some of the fall in our cattle prices today are out of the control of our industry and are linked to our nation's economy and the extreme drought that is continuing to affect a large part of the US. We can, however work on establishing a base value for our cattle through better marketing the value of Longhorn genetics to the commercial cattlemen, the benefits of Longhorn Beef to the American Beef Consumer, who is becoming even more health conscious. I believe it is once again time to start climbing the ladder. Starting with the bottom end and pushing upward. It worked before and I believe it can again. It will be up to the breeders to help start the climb one step at a time. The commercial cattle market is seeing record high prices for all types of cattle. Some Longhorn cattle actually have more value at a commercial sale than they do at a registered sale. This will make the climb a lot easier now that ALL cattle are selling for higher prices at commercial auction barns.

**Level One - Culls** – As breeders, it is our responsibility to cull our herds of inferior cattle that should not be in our breed. These are cattle that have genetic defects and are of just overall poor quality. Whether or not we breeders like to admit it we have some calves that need to be culled out of the breed. These cattle have little to no value.

**Level Two – Beef Grade** – These are the cattle that do not have the pedigree, conformation, or horn that a seed-stock producer would want to use. Maybe they are poor breeders, poor milkers or maybe have a bad

udder. They could be of any age or sex so long as they are healthy. At this time it is up to the individual as to how they market or sell Longhorn beef. Those who sell Longhorn beef generally price their hamburger meat for around \$4 per pound and up. An 800lb animal will yield about 300lbs of hamburger meat which establishes a value of \$1,200 on this type of animal. There are some slaughter houses that will pay you a hanging weight price which in most cases is a better price than you will receive for the live animal at a sale in today's current market. You can sell your beef this way without having to market your beef yourself. At registered Longhorn sales, these types of cattle will currently sell for well under \$1,200. In most cases the selling price will be around \$500-\$600 per head which leaves little profit after paying the sale consignment fees. There are a large number of cattle that fit into this category and the next category, Cow/Calf Producer Grade. By removing these cattle from the industry it will help balance the supply and demand which will help increase the value of the Cow/Calf Producer Grade and the Registered Seed-stock cattle.



**Level Three - Cow/Calf Producer Grade** – What is a cow/calf producer looking for in a cow? He is looking for a calf raiser, a cow that can wean a fat and healthy calf. These cattle need to have a good



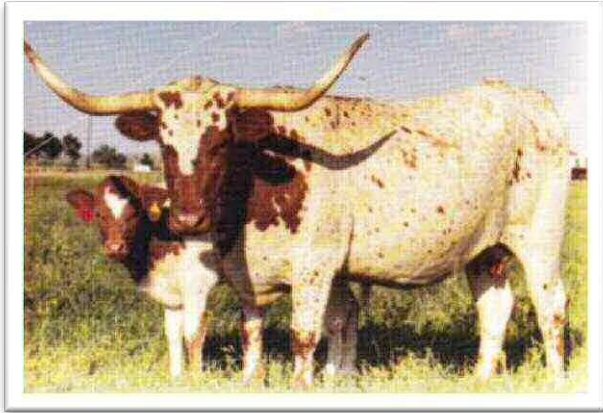
August 2012 - 3yr old female w/ 7mo Angus sired calf

body, udder and be sound breeders. The cattle in this group lack good horn or pedigree to be used by most seed-stock producers. These cattle are of value to the cow/calf producer. When these types of cattle are sold in a registered sale they currently will bring about \$500 per head. I know of several cases where these types of cattle have sold in a registered sale for \$300-\$400. The buyer then hauled these cattle straight to the local auction barn and sold the cattle, made a profit of \$100-\$150 per head. I have seen reports of Longhorn cows with non-longhorn sired calves sell for \$550-\$750.00 at some sale barns. If the base value of the Beef Grade cattle is established to be about \$900-\$1,200.00

for an average 800lb cow then the Cow/Calf Producer Grade cattle should be worth at least that same amount or slightly more. If they are not worth that amount on the hoof then they can be sold as beef. There are a large number of cattle that fit into this category and the next category, Registered Seed-stock cattle. By developing a market for these cattle with commercial cattle producers it will help balance the supply and demand by their offspring not being registered. This would also increase the value of the Registered Seed-stock cattle.

**Level Four - Registered Seed-stock Cattle** – These are quality Longhorn cattle that have all the desirable Longhorn traits with good genetics, conformation and good horn development for their age (55”- 65”). They are used to produce the next generation of Registered Texas Longhorn Cattle. If we established a market and the value of the cattle on the lower rungs of the ladder at around \$1,200 then it stands to reason that the value for Registered seed-stock should be in excess of \$1,200. Currently, that is not the case, with most of the cattle that would fall into this category selling under \$1,200.





**Level Five - Elite or Top End Registered Seed-stock Cattle** – These are top quality Longhorn cattle that excel in all the desirable Longhorn traits for their age. These cattle have outstanding production records that show consistency in producing top quality offspring. These cattle almost always sell for a respectable price and their value is usually set by the buyers who are looking for the best of the breed. There is only a minimal percentage of the breed that would fall into this category. To produce cattle that would fit into this category should be the goal of most breeders.

**Level Six - Collectable Cattle** – These are the cattle that are the extremes in the breed with the main focus being on horn length. The value of the cattle in this category is most often determined by the numbers on a tape measure rather than the overall quality of the animal or their production. Their value is unpredictable and is set by the individual who desires to own one of the longest horn animals in the breed and willingness to pay for that privilege. Their value is not affected by the price of the cattle below them and their prices have almost no effect on the cattle on the lower ladder rungs. Only a **very small** percentage of the cattle in our industry fall into this category. This also means that only a **very small** percentage of breeders will ever produce a cow that will end up in this category.



As we look at these categories of cattle within our industry, a couple of very important things must be noted. One is, no matter how good the breeding, or breeding program, there are going to be cull cattle, but with good breeding practices and strict culling by breeders, the numbers can be limited. The second is that the majority of breeders are producing cattle that end up in the middle categories of Beef Grade, Cow/Calf Producer Grade and Registered Seed-stock. The problem with this is that the supply of these types of cattle is high and the current market demand is low. In order to change this we need to decrease the number of cattle. This can be done by processing more cattle for beef and/or selling more cattle for use in a cow/calf operation, basically removing these cattle from the registered herd inventory. In recent months there has been a steady rise in beef cattle prices and a shortage of slaughter ready cattle. The increase in beef cattle prices has resulted in an increase in price for Longhorns at local auction barns. Now is the time for our associations and breeders to take advantage of these higher prices and to also increase awareness of the benefits of using Longhorn genetics by using a national promotional campaign with the goal being to increase the demand for Longhorn genetics which would increase the interest for Registered Longhorn Seed-Stock Cattle. If most of the members of our association produce cattle that are in these middle categories, then one would think that the associations would be focused on helping to promote these types of cattle that make up the largest percentage of the cattle in the Association. However, as most of us know, this is not the case because the associations' promotional focus seems to be more on the Elite or Collectable cattle. For the needed change to take place, the Longhorn industry must stop emphasizing the single trait of long horns and start focusing on the historical traits that have made this breed viable for hundreds of years.

# Just My Thoughts and Observations

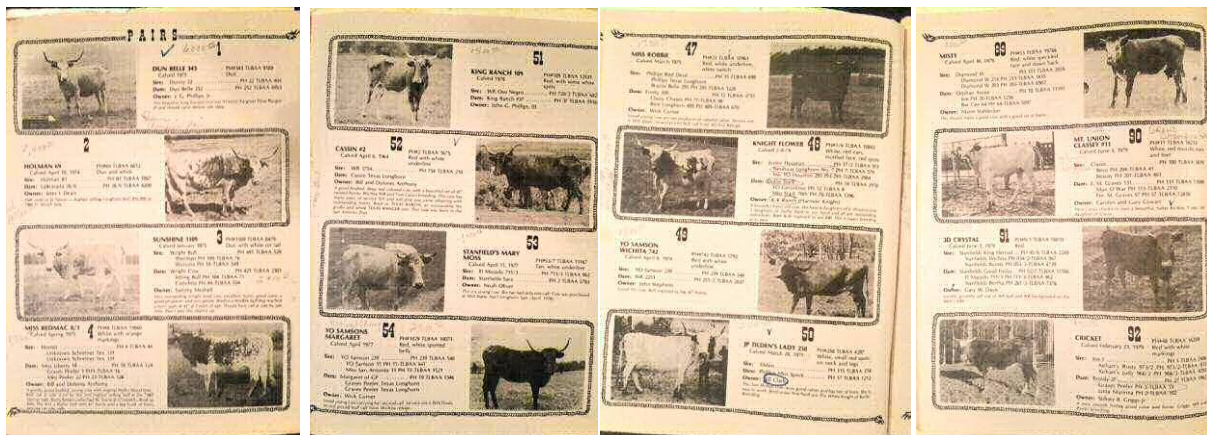
From over 35 years of Working with TEXAS LONGHORNS

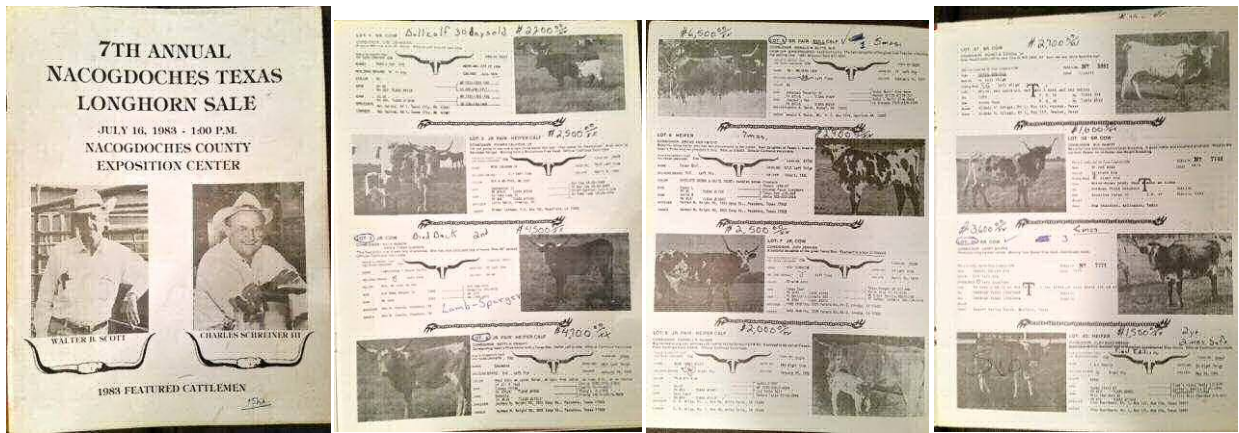
I find it hard to realize that June of 2015 marked my thirty fifth year of being involved with the Texas Longhorn Breed. It was at the young age of 12 years old that I developed my passion for this wonderful and majestic breed. That passion still burns deep within me today and I couldn't image myself without Longhorns in my life. God has blessed me with the ability to work with these great cattle as a way of make a living. God not only blessed me with being able to work with a breed of cattle that I love but in the process, He has blessed me with many wonderful friends. All I can say is it has been an awesome journey!

Over my 35 years of working with Longhorns I have accumulated a pretty large collection of Longhorn magazines and sale catalogs. On rainy and dreary days I sometimes enjoy going through my collection and reflecting on the history that I have had the honor of witnessing in the breed. I thought it would be nice to give the new breeders and those interested in the breeds history a chance to see where this breed has come from I have attached pictures of the pages from sale catalogs from 25 to 30 years ago. The interest in the cattle was high and the numbers of registered Texas Longhorn cattle were very low back in the 1980's. As you look over these catalog pages, you will notice that there are a few names that you will be familiar with and others that you will not know or may have only heard mentioned by another long time breeder. A lot of Texas Longhorn breeders, Longhorn enthusiast, collectors and hobbyist that have come before us. Some had a major impact on the breed while others just simply enjoyed the breed and had little too no long term impact on the breed. Some of the cattle in these catalogs can be found in the pedigrees of today's cattle.

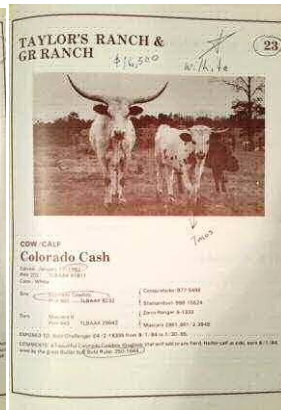
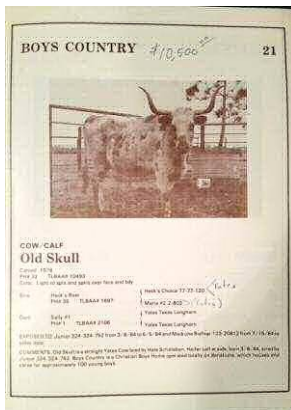
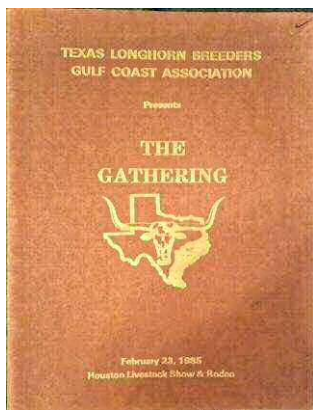
From Sale Catalogs in 1980's

First pages are from the 1980 Nacogdoches Longhorn Sale, which was one of the Registered Texas Longhorn Sales I attended. It would later become the First Texas Longhorn Sale where I consigned cattle and would be their youngest consignor.



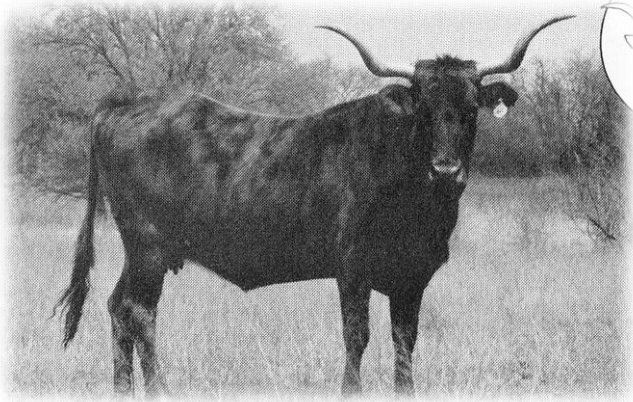


The cow to the left can be found in the pedigrees of a number of today's bigger horn cattle. Not long after she sold in this sale she would produce a daughter, Bet I Can. That daughter would produce a cow name Know I Can. If you study the herds of Bob Loomis and J.L. Collier you will find this cows genetics.

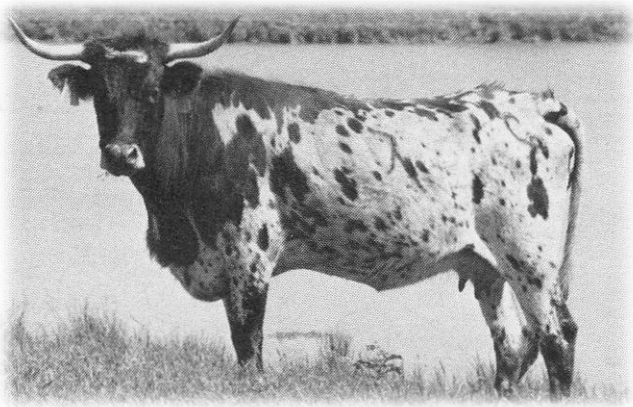


You will also notice a change in the quality of the cattle. Some will be quick to say "we have sure improved the breed in 30 plus years". But have we really improved the breed? I think the answer is both yes and no. I think we have made progress in the Longhorn breed in regards to beneficial traits of conformation, size and milk production. In my opinion these improvements are due in part to genetic selection and better herd management practices with better nutrition. We have also seen an "improvement", if you want to call it that, in the less important traits of horn length and hair coat color. These are for the most part, non-functional traits and have little to no benefit to the animal. All these improvements seem to have had little effect on the over physical characteristics (phenotype) of the breed. The phenotype (*the visible and physical characteristics of an organism resulting from the interaction between its genetic makeup and the environment*) has remained basically unchanged. The traits of horn length and hair color and there "improvements" have more to do with improving the animals eye appeal to prospective buyers or collectors. Any or all of these trait "improvements" can become harmful to the breed when taken to the extreme or becomes the sole focus of the breeder or breed.

Let's take a look at two cow families as examples of the progression of the Longhorn breed. These are examples of increases in horn length, conformation and color within a cow family line. As you look at these old photos you will notice that the horn length is longer but please take special note of the phenotype.



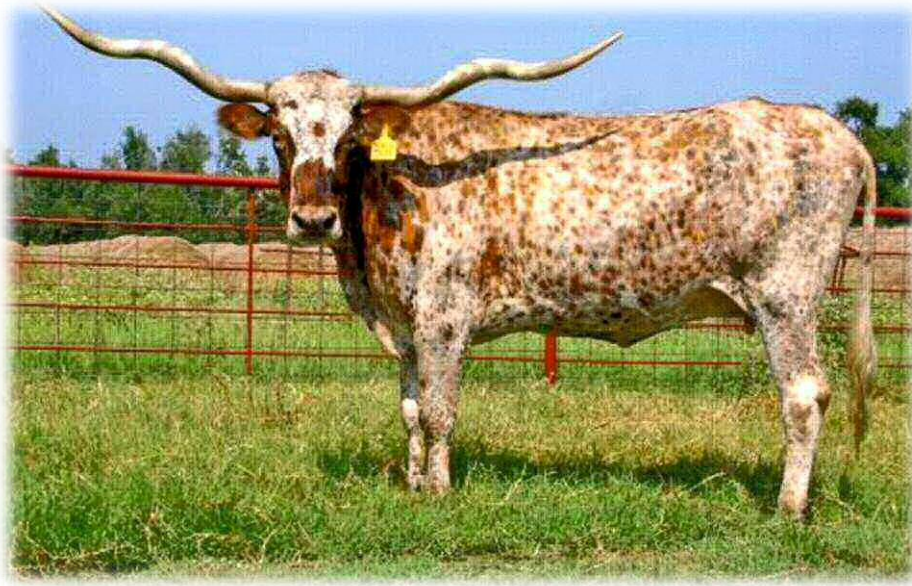
This is Senorita Yates 32, who was born in 1969. This photo is from a 1985 sale catalog where she was a winner of a "gold medallion" for having a tip-to-tip measurement of over 36". She sold for \$1,500.00. Would you believe me if I told you that her genetics are still having an impact on today's Longhorn cattle? Well they are and I bet you are wondering through which animals. Keep reading.



This is CP Yates Cactus Flower, who is a 1981 daughter of Senorita Yates 32. This photo is from the same 1985 sale catalog that her dam's photo is from. She sold as the next lot after her dam. Would you believe me if I told you that her genetics were also still having an impact on today's Longhorn cattle? Well they are and again I bet that you are wondering through which animals. **Hint:** *at the time she sold she was bred to Mr. Measles*

The genetics of these two females are being carried on in today's Longhorn cattle in the form of multiple daughters and granddaughters that are available and still producing through the marvels of modern technology. These genetic are being passed on today all because CP Yates Cactus Flower produce a heifer by Mr. Measles. Mr. Measles was a son of Texas Ranger JP and one of the greatest cows of all time Measles. The resulting heifer would slowly mature into a beautiful tricolored cow with triple twist horns measuring in the upper 70's. ***Who is this daughter?***

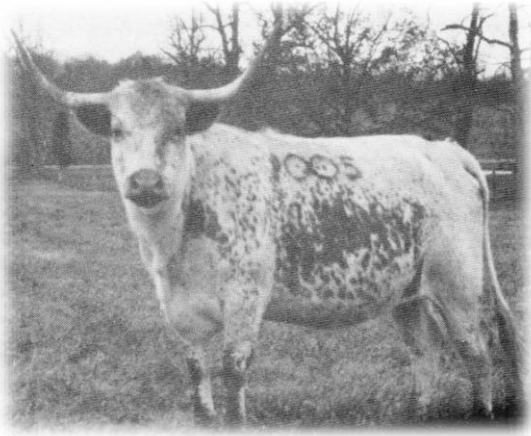
# Answer: CP Measles Flower



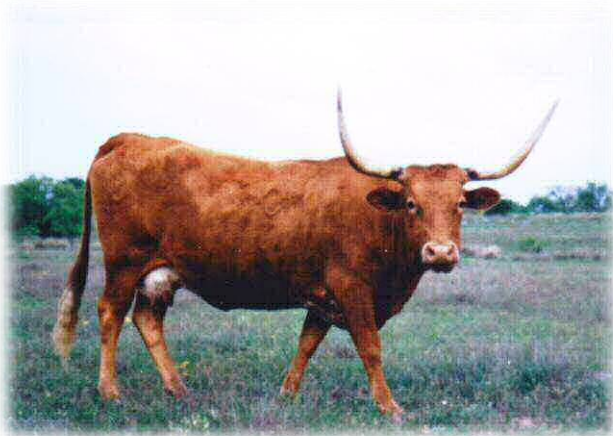
This is CP Measles Flower, she is the deceased daughter of CP Yates Cactus Flower and a granddaughter of Senorita Yates 32. The genetics of all of these females are being carried on to a new generation through the clones of CP Measles Flower like FC Measles Flower and several others.



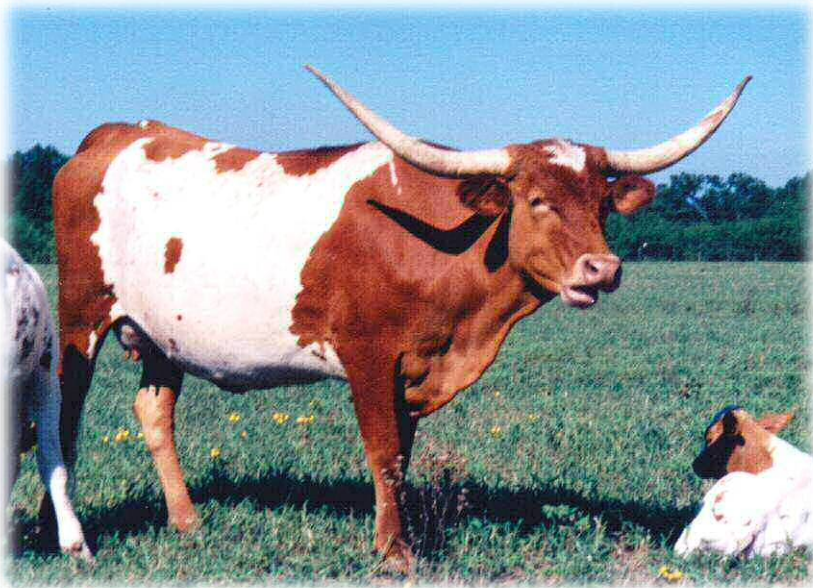
As you look at this family line you can easily see the improvement in body size, conformation and horn length over the three generations. But note the phenotype is the same from generation to generation, virtually unchanged. In other words they still look like a Longhorn just more horn, color and body size. Their body structure, head shape, ear size, eye set and horn set are all similar and met the breed standards established by the Texas Longhorn Breeders Association of America. The breed "improvements" in this example had no negative effects on this family line when it comes to phenotype. Let's look at another family line with similar results.



This photo is from a 1983 Sale catalog of Wix Ruth . She is a 1978 daughter of the Wright bred bull, Champ 858 and her dam was Rita, a Bell Tower Multi Sired cow. Back in the beginning of TLBAA it was not uncommon for cattle to be register as being Multi Sired. Some ranches would run several bulls with their cow herds and back then there was no DNA testing to prove who the actual sire was, so calves would be register as Multi Sired. At the time of the sale Wix Ruth, was bred to a \$62,000 bull named Impressive. The resulting heifer would go on to produce daughters that can be found in some of today's top cattle.



This photo is of Impressive Ruth, the 1983 daughter of Impressive and the above cow Wix Ruth. She had horns measuring in the mid 40's but boy could she produce when bred to a son of Superior and Doherty 698 by the name of Phenomenon. This mating produced several outstanding daughters all of which measured in the 70" range at maturity.



This is a photo of Phenomenal Abigail at the age of 3yrs with a horn measurement of 54+ ". She is a daughter Impressive Ruth and a granddaughter of Wix Ruth. Many breeders consider Phenomenal Abigail to be one of the best daughters Phenomenon ever produced. She always commanded a top price when she was offered at auction. Many of her offspring have sold for big money as well.



Once again when you analyze the progression of this cow family the increase in certain traits is pretty easy to spot. There is definitely an increase in horn length and lateral growth. There is also an increase in body size. But even with these changes there is no change in the phenotype with the "improvements" that occurred within this family line. These are only two examples of many that show improvements in horn, color and size with no change in the phenotype.

Now the question that I am searching for the answer to is "why is it that with these and other family lines we can see an increase in horn length, lateral horn growth, body size and better conformation over a three generation time period with no change to the phenotype but when we look at animals where the breeder is breeding to increase the horn base we not only see the increase in the base but a distinct change in the phenotype?" The animals that are being bred for large horn bases, in my opinion, have a very different look or phenotype. Their head shapes, horn sets, eye set, ear shape and set, are all a little different. You can even see slight changes in the body structure of these animals. Why is this? I am just looking to have a better understanding of why we are seeing this change in phenotype in our cattle and why this change is acceptable. Some of these phenotype changes are things that I was taught to breed away from by the old timers that bred and studied this breed long before I came along. I want to insure that I am being a good steward of this great breed. I feel and believe that we, as breeders, have a duty and responsibility to up hold the breed guidelines that were established when the Texas Longhorn Breeders Association of America was founded. I do not want to let down all the men and women who work so hard to keep the Texas Longhorn from becoming extinct by letting non-longhorn traits to become an expectable part of our breed. I believe that every breeder has the right to breed and raise whatever type of Texas Longhorn they like so long as the phenotype (*the visible and physical characteristics of an organism resulting from the interaction between its genetic makeup and the environment*) remains basically unchanged. In other words they still look like a Texas Longhorn.

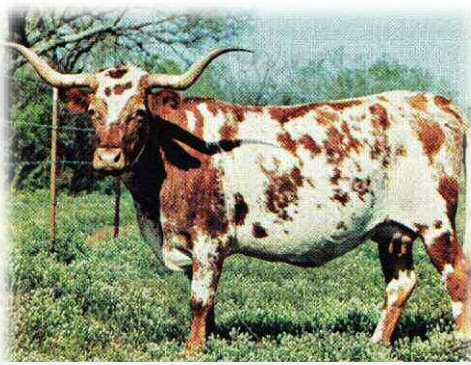
These opinions are all based on my observations from 35 years in the Longhorn business. It has only been in the last few years that I have been seeing this change in phenotype. Improving and bettering the breed is a good thing so long as the overall phenotype of the animal is staying the same and true to the breed standards.

## “A Shrinking Longhorn Gene Pool”

In the early days of the Texas Longhorn Breed registry and even before there was a breed registry (TLBAA) there was only a hand full of folks that were dedicated to preserving the Longhorn or at least their idea of the Longhorn. This in most cases was usually based on childhood memories. These individuals were located in different parts of the country but mostly Texas. These folks would gather together any cattle that they felt showed to be Longhorn or a strong Longhorn influence. They acquired these cattle by various means such as inherited from family, purchases at auction barns, slaughter houses and from individuals out in the country. As time went by these small isolated herds of Longhorns



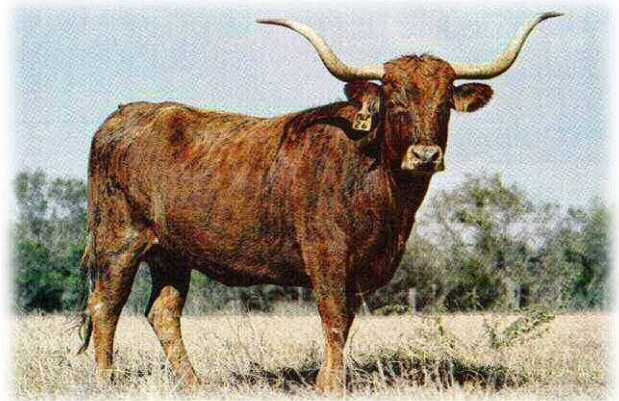
Texas Ranger JP is the animal that everyone thinks of when it comes to the Phillips Bloodline. Syndicated for \$1.5



3S Luciana - Marks Bloodline

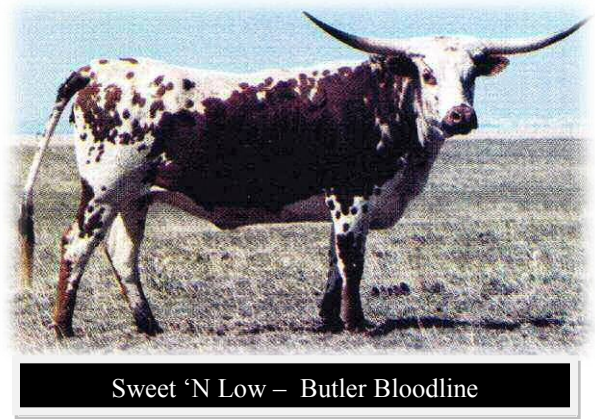
would become the foundation for preserving the Longhorn breed. These herds would be referred to by their owners' last names...Marks, Yates, Butler, Phillips, Peeler, and Wright. Because these herds were mainly closed to outside influence they became known as a straight Longhorn bloodline or straight family of Longhorn cattle because their ancestry could be traced back to only cattle from that herd or the cattle that made up the foundation of that herd. They were not genetically closely related to any of the other herds. They are all Longhorns but

exhibited slight variations from herd to herd in their phenotype and breeder selected traits. These variations were mainly based on that breeder's particular preference for a particular look or trait. In the 1960's the government sent out a group of inspectors to select cattle to establish a herd of Longhorns on the Wichita Wildlife Refuge in Oklahoma. This herd would take on the name of WR which is the brand they carried on their shoulder. The WR cattle would be added to the above list of foundation herds. Later on these seven herds would end up becoming known as the “Seven Families”. These herds would become the foundation of today's modern day Longhorn herds. The term used to describe the cattle that trace back to only one of these herds throughout its pedigree was “Straight” and whatever the breeder or herd name. (Example: Straight Marks).

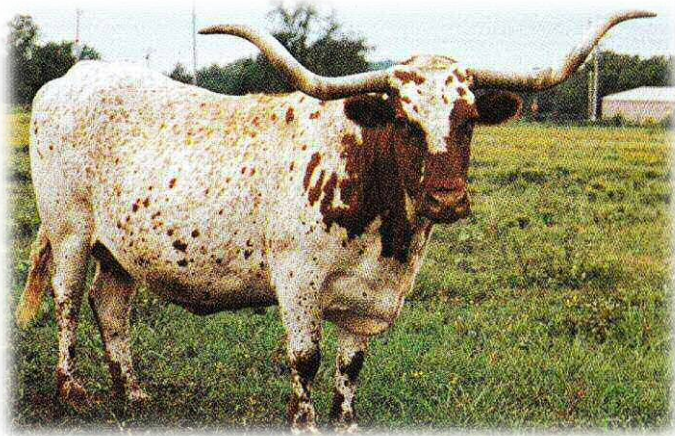


WR 26 – sold for \$40,000 & straight WR

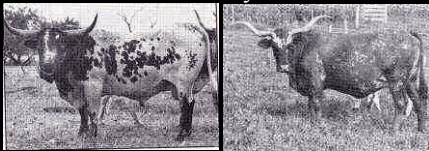
Let's talk about Longhorn genetics and the term "Blend Genetics". You must first start by crossing two animals of every different and distinct bloodlines or families with the results being an offspring that exhibits hybrid vigor, combining the best of both parents. The crossing of the resulting offspring with another different straight bloodline results in a three way cross which produces "blended" genetics in the offspring. A "Blend Genetic" cross consists of a cross using three or more of the "Seven Families" bloodlines. "This super cross, when it clicks, produces Longhorns with the complete package of size, horns and color without sacrificing the "internal" qualities and traits which has enabled the breed to thrive for centuries". The more you cross the "blended genetics" the more diluted the genetics of the "straight bloodlines" become on the next generation.



Sweet 'N Low – Butler Bloodline

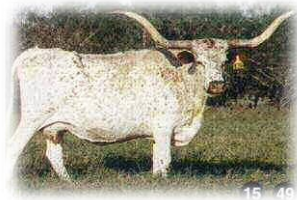


Doherty 698, one of the most influential cows in Longhorn history is a classic example of crossing two straight bloodlines (WR sire X Wright dam). She went on to become a legendary producer with 60+” and the dam of legendary producers like Phenomenon, Overwhelmer, Dixie Ruler and Doherty’s Ruler.



Her sire Senor Mulage measured 40” and her dam Wright 489 measured 49” at 13 yrs.

In 2012 "Blend Genetics" are the way most breeders are going about producing cattle for their herds and the Longhorn industry. However to keep producing "Blend" cattle with true "hybrid vigor" you need a distinct or predominantly pure bloodline to start with, which is what we had in the Longhorn breed with the original "Seven Families" but are lacking today. Today there are only a small number of breeders that are dedicated to producing non-blend or straight genetics that are traceable to only one of the original "Seven Families". The Butler bloodline is one of the few bloodlines from one of the original "Seven Families" that is still being preserved, protected and promoted today in 2012. Many of the other bloodlines from the other "Seven Families" (Marks, Wright, WR, Phillips, and Yates & Peeler) are falling to the way side. This is going to limit breeders' ability to continue to produce true "blend genetics" that will have a true hybrid vigor which is one of the factors that has led to the success of blend genetics. We are basically blending the "Seven Families" out of existence and thus limiting the genetic gene pool to extremely blended genetics.



Phillips X WR

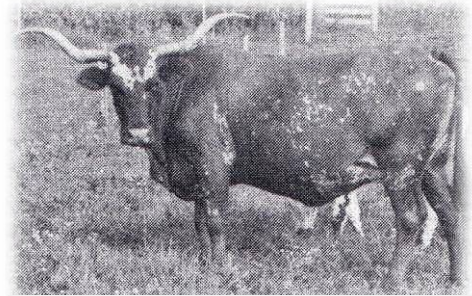
Butler X WR

Phillips X WR X Butler

Butler X Phillips

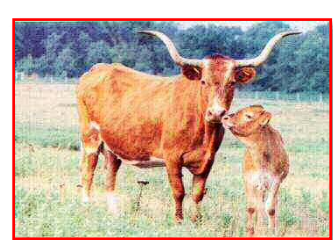
In my opinion, we are slowly limiting our Longhorn genetic base due to a couple of other factors. One is that we do not have enough breeders working to preserve the original “Seven Families” of WR, Wright, Phillips, Marks, Peeler, Yates and Butler. The other is the fact that most breeders today are focused on breeding for two single traits, LONG HORNS and BIG BASES. Everyone is breeding for the longest tip-to-tip horn measurement they can get and that measurement keeps getting higher. At one time the magic number was 50” then it was 60” then it was 70” and now it is 80 or more. The bigger the better is not always best

because we are now producing cattle with non-functional horns that are almost completely incapable of fighting off predators. Breeders want a lot of flat straight out horn growth at a young age which has resulted in a decrease in the beautiful twisty horn cattle of yesteryear because you do not get twisty horns out of early straight horn growth. The development of twisty horns is a slow process. Also by focusing on these single traits breeders are also focusing on the same genetics or combination of genetics. Open any of the breed publications and you will see advertisements featuring offspring or cattle that trace back in one generation to the same five or six bulls.



Wright Bloodline  
Wright 489 – Dam of Doherty 698

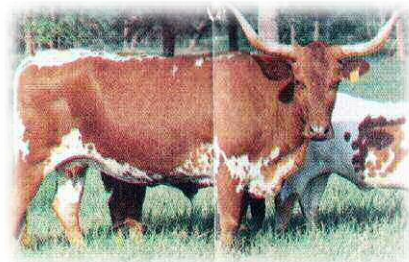
Attend any Longhorn sale and you will find that these same five or six sires will dominate the pedigrees of the animals in the sale. Some of these offspring will mostly likely be the high selling lots of the sale. The high prices for the offspring of these herd sires have increased other breeders’ interest in these genetics. I am not saying that these sires are not good bulls. I am saying, in my opinion, by focusing on single trait selection and an intense focus on the genetics for those traits we are limiting our genetic pool more every day.



**We are breeding the twisty horns out of our breed.**

The Angus breed is a good example of the problem of being focused on a single factor in animal selection. Angus breeders tend to focus on EPD numbers. (EPD's are the **Expected Progeny Difference** which is a measure of the expected difference in performance of a sire's progeny when compared to the average progeny of all sires evaluated within the same breed. This prediction is based on actual performance, progeny performance and relatives' performance. EPD's are used by many breeds.) They use EPD's when selecting their animals and making mating selection rather than the animals themselves. They study EPD's for calving ease, birth weight, weaning weights, yearling weight and about 15 other traits. They make their selections based on these EPD's numbers. These EPD numbers were created as a tool to aide in cattle selects not to be the main focus of animal selection.

In recent years the Angus Association has been faced with dealing with a genetic defect, Arthrogryposis Multiplex (AM) or commonly known as "curly calf". This genetic defect is present in several of the more popular pedigrees with the best EPD's and can be found in herds located all across the US and even throughout the world. They have been able to control and limit the effect of this defect through the use of modern testing technology. However this has had an impact on the genetic diversity of the Angus breed but that impact is limited due to the sheer numbers of registered Angus cattle. To put this in perspective the Angus association registered over 500,000 head last year so if 50% of the animals where affected by this defect breeders would still have 250,000 head of that year's production to utilize in their breeding programs and thus the effect is limited. The TLBAA on the other hand has registered just a little over 500,000 head since its beginning in 1964. They registered around 9000 head last year so if we had a genetic defect that affected the most popular sires by 50% or more it would be much harder for our breed to recover. With most breeders using herd sires that are sons or grandsons of three or four of the most popular bulls their genetic impact on the breeds replacement females is huge. If one of these popular sires should have a genetic defect the spread of the defect would be widespread and hard to overcome.



King Ranch 398 – Peeler Bloodline

We as breeders need to focus on preserving and protecting the Longhorn gene pool from genetic defects as well as the influence of non-Longhorn genetics (*That's a subject for another day*). We also need to focus on keeping our genetic diversity so as not to lose our breeds unique and beneficial traits of hardiness, disease resistance, fertility, calving ease, longevity, milking and mothering ability.

Over the last couple of years I have began hearing cattlemen that buy Longhorns for cross breeding and/or roping calves talk about having to doctor the cattle more because it seems that they are not as hardy as they once were. When I questioned them about the genetics of the Longhorn cattle that they were seeing the most problems with we determined that most of the problem cattle were of "modern" genetics. They noted little too no problem with cattle that went back to old blood in the second generation of their pedigree. Granted this was not a scientific study but merely an observation of possible changes within our breed due to the narrowing of our breed's gene pool with breeders focusing on using a select group of bulls to increase a single trait. In the past weaker genetics were weeded out by the natural selection process. Those with a weaker immune system would die off due to their inability to withstand being exposed to the simplest of deceases or severe weather conditions. Today a lot of these weaker cattle are in production because of modern day vaccines that help them fight off

deceases and a “pampered” life style that keeps them out of the weather. In the past Longhorn cattle were know for their decease resistance and hardiness but today I am hearing and seeing a slight decrease in these areas in our cattle in part in my opinion to single trait selection, a weakening of our gene pool, over vaccinating and the “pampering” of the cattle.

We as Longhorn Breeders like to think that we are improving the breed but are we really improving the breed when we go to extremes to keep genetically weaker and in some case poor breeders in production because we want to keep these “superior genes” in our herds/breed because of their super record setting horn growth that is so very eye appealing to the big spenders. Are we simply stroking our own egos by breeding for the longest horns? Yes, it is my opinion



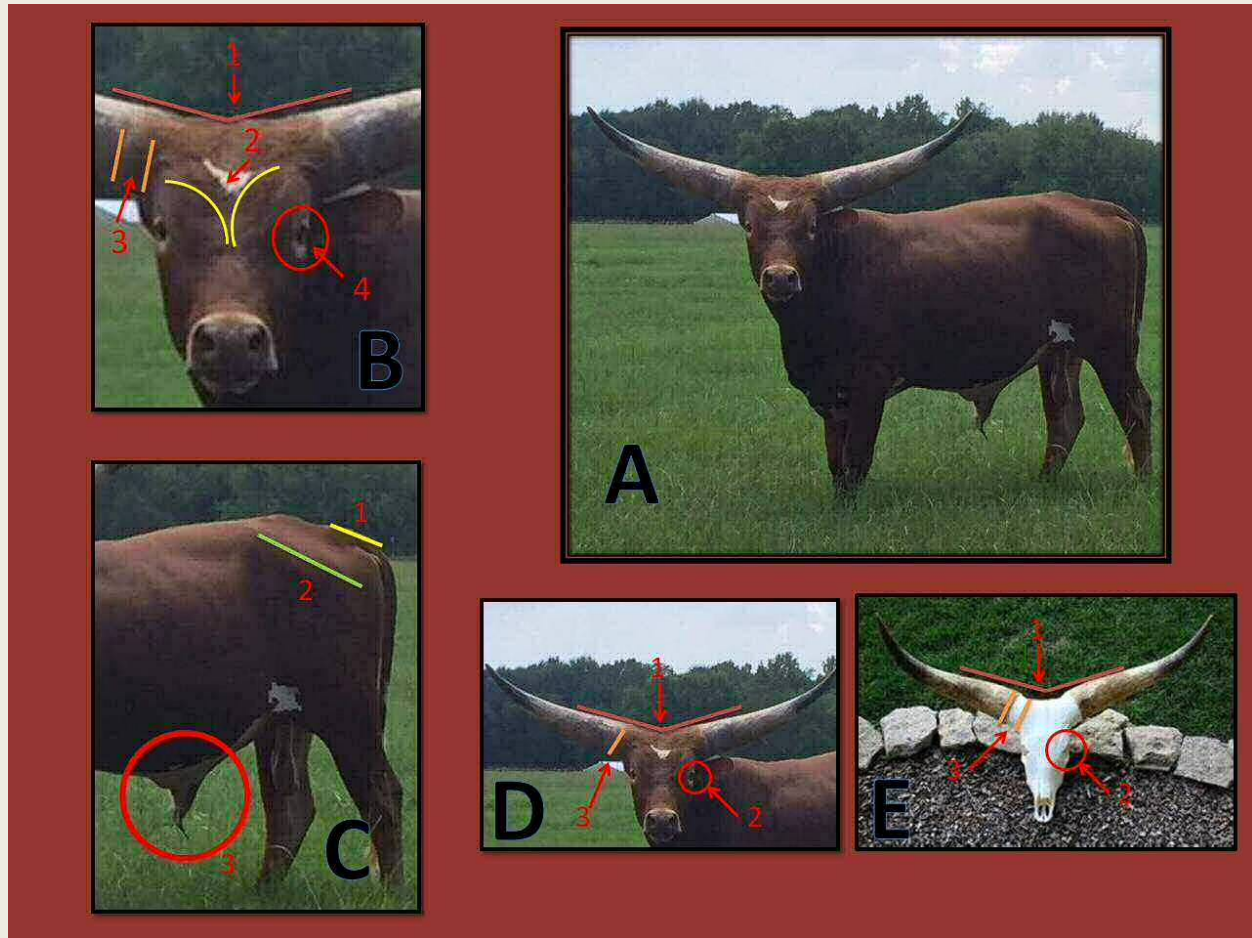
Yates bloodline

that egos and bragging rights have played a huge role in sending us in the direction of single trait selection for HORN. The length of the horns has nothing to do with the overall quality of our cattle but it is where some people are putting the value. They are convincing other buyers and breeders that horn length is the only way to truly judge the value of our cattle because they will only buy the ones with extreme horn. They are basically using their money to drive our Longhorn market in the direction of horn length having more value over other more important and functional traits. It is pretty hard to truly improve a breed of cattle like the Texas Longhorn that has been proven by the test of time and the survival of the fittest. I can promise you that adding more length of horn to the cattle in the Longhorn breed is NOT improving the breed. The Texas Longhorn is one of the few breeds of cattle that have had to pass the toughest test of all...by surviving on their own. They are not a breed developed by man but rather a breed that was created by God and developed by Mother Nature without the interference of man until recent years. It has been stated before that the Longhorn is a “Genetic Goldmine” and I believe it is but a lot that “Genetic Gold” is being wasted and tarnished with the single trait breeding selection that is being practiced by breeders today.

# Longhorn Vs Watusi

Recognizing Breed Characteristics.

Let me start by saying, this article is not meant in any way to be accusatory to anyone or their breeding program. It is being written with the soul intent to help educate newer Texas Longhorn Breeders about the differences between the breed characteristic of the Texas Longhorn and other horned breeds of cattle, mainly the Watusi. I am not saying we do or do not have Watusi influence in today's Longhorn cattle but I do believe that breeders need to be able to recognize the differences in the breed characteristics of the Texas Longhorn vs. the Watusi. We are going to take a look at these differences and make a point by point comparison.



**Photo B & D** 1) The Poll/ Top of Head with V shape. 2) The forehead has a slight V in it. 3) Horn shell and hairline starts a good distance from the side of the head. 4 on B & 2 on D) Eye socket set differently than a Longhorn. 5) Bone space between the skull side and the start of the outer horn shell is larger than the Longhorn. **Photo C** 1) Tail head 2) Slope from hooks to pins. 3) Navel

Look at Photo A. Is this bull a Longhorn? Is this bull a Watusi? Is this bull a Longhorn Watusi cross that is sometimes called a LongTusi? When you look at the bull as a whole it may not be easy for you to tell for sure which is the correct answer.

Let's break it down a little more by looking at his head in Photos B and D. Look at Point 1 which is the poll or top of the head. When we look at this point you will notice a V shape to the poll, which is a characteristic of a Watusi. This V shape can be easily seen in Photo E, which is a Watusi skull. A Longhorn's poll is pretty much flat, see Photo F of Longhorn skull below. Note the difference in the polls.

Now let's look back at Photo B to Point 2, the middle of the head, there is a V shape there as well which is another Watusi trait.

Now look at Point 3, the distance of the hairline from the side of the head. You will notice the hairline and the start of the outer horn shell is a good ways away from the side of the head. This is another characteristic of the Watusi. Look at the Watusi skull Photo E, notice the amount of bone showing before the horn shell starts. See Photo F of the Longhorn skull, notice the difference, the horn shell starts close to the side of the skull.

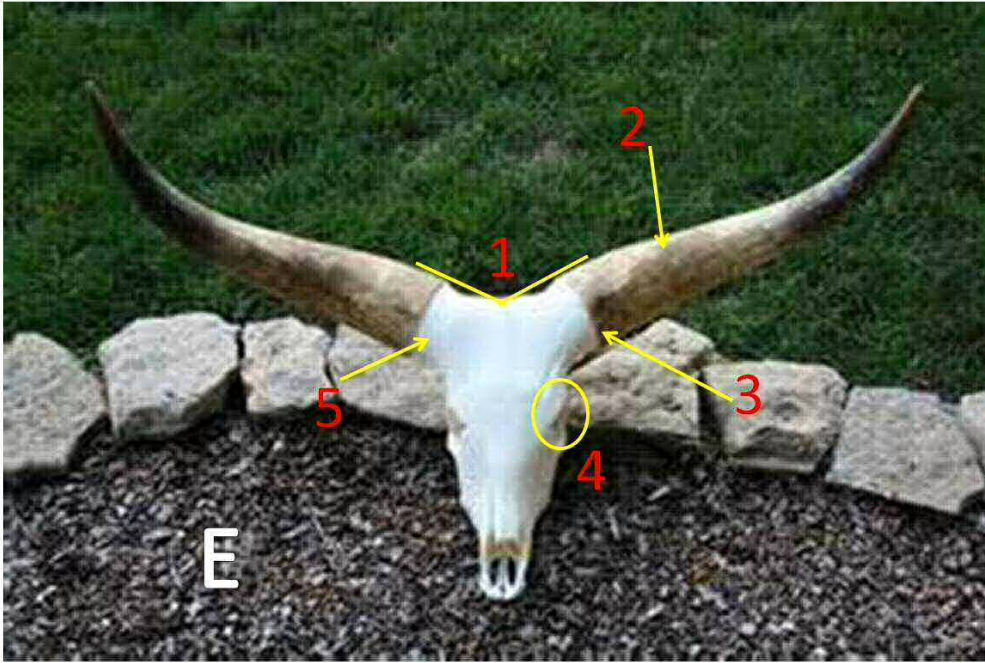
In Photo B look at Point 4, the eyes and the way they are set. The difference is pretty subtle but becomes more apparent when you look at Photo E and Photo F.

At this point it is looking more like the bull in Photo A is not a Longhorn. Looking at Photo C you will notice at Point 2 that there is a great deal of slope from hooks to pins. This slope is more than you will see on most Longhorns. You will also notice at Point 1 that the top of the tail head is flatter than most longhorns. Looking at Point 3 on Photo C you notice the navel and it's pendulous shape. This example is not as extreme as it can be when Watusi influence is present. After looking at the breed characteristics one by one we can see that this bull is not Longhorn and the Watusi characteristics are not strong enough to be a full blood Watusi. In fact he is 50% Longhorn and 50% Watusi. This bull has never been promoted as anything other than what he is, a percent bull which made him a good example to use in our evaluation.

Crossbred bulls, like the one used in our example, are produced as a way of up breeding the Watusi from a percentage to a Full Blood status. Most Watusi breeders use this method as a way to build or grow their herds. Percentage Watusi bulls or Full Blood Watusi were also used to produce Longhorn - Watusi cross roping steers with more base so they could hold up to the stress of roping. This practice was used years ago by some Longhorn breeders to increase their roping steer market, which was a mainstay of many breeders back in the late 1980's and early 1990's.

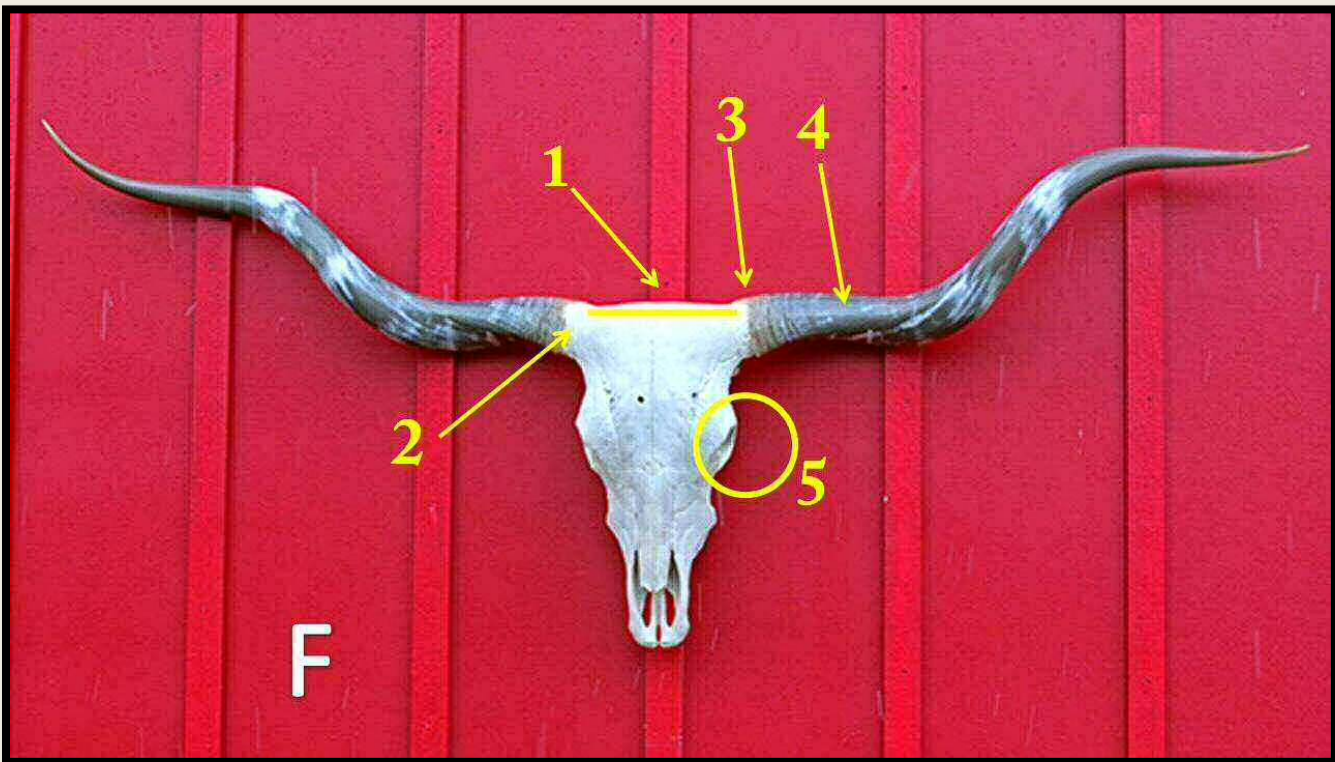
In the bovine world there are two classifications of cattle. *Bos taurus* and *Bos indicus*. They are all cattle but different species. The Watusi and the Brahman are in the *Bos indicus* classification. When these cattle are crossed with cattle from the *Bos taurus* classification the traits or characteristics of these cattle can be diluted down but remain in the background of animals in the form of recessive genes. When two animals with a large amount of *Bos taurus* influence have even a small amount of *Bos indicus* genetics several generations back are bred to each other the resulting offspring can exhibit or express the recessive genes or characteristics of the *Bos indicus* cattle. This can happen even though the parents do not exhibit or express the *Bos indicus* traits. This can even happen when the recessive genes are 4 or more generations back but may not happen each or every time these particular animals are mated to each other. Because of these factors it is very important for Longhorn breeders to understand what to look for when visually inspecting your cattle.





E

**Watusi Skull** 1) The Poll/ Top of Head with V shape. 2) The horn has the thickness from the base almost better than half way of the horn. 3) Horn shell starts a good distance from the side of the skull. 4) Eye socket set differently than a Longhorn. 5) Bone space between the skull side and the start of the outer horn shell is larger than the Longhorn.



F

**Longhorn Skull** 1) Poll/Top of Head straight and flat for the most part. Unlike the V shape of the Watusi skull. 2) Outer horn shell starts almost at the side of the skull unlike the Watusi skull. 3) Very little space before the outer horn shell starts. 4) The horn starts getting smaller almost immediately as it gets further out from the base unlike the Watusi which doesn't until about half way out on the horn. 5) Eye socket and placement differs from the Watusi.

By studying the differences in breed characteristics between the Longhorn and the Watusi breeds, it will help breeders to notice the slight but important differences found in the cattle that have the influence of non-Longhorn genetics. Each one of these characteristics on its own doesn't always indicate the presents of non-Longhorn genetics. However when you look at them one by one and then again as a whole it can really assist breeders in spotting cattle that exhibit non Longhorn characteristics. By being able to recognize these non Longhorn traits or characteristics, breeders can make better genetic decisions for their herd and for future generations of the legendary Texas Longhorn Breed. As breeders, it is our responsibility to protect the Texas Longhorn Breed. If you do not know what to look for when visually inspecting Longhorn cattle then you are not going to be able to honor your responsibility as a Texas Longhorn Breeder. By being open to learning about this great breed we can be better stewards of the Longhorn legacy that we are supposed to be preserving and protecting. Honor the Breed by knowing the Breed.

# Care Of Older Cattle



Texas Longhorn cattle are known for their longevity, living into their mid to late teens. There are documented accounts of cattle living into their twenties with some making it into their thirties. While living that long is a major accomplishment for a bovine some of these animals even continue to produce quality offspring along the way. In the case of most of these cattle they do this with little to no extra help. It's my opinion that we are seeing a decrease in the longevity in our breed, but that is a whole other topic for another day.

In this brief article, we are going to talk about the little extra care that a breeder can provide for the senior cows in the herd. Sometimes new breeders find it more affordable to purchase older proven cattle to hopefully build their herd. This is not always an affordable way to go but rather a costly way when you are not prepared to provide the extra care they may need. I am not saying "don't buy older cattle" but rather educate yourself and be prepared to go the extra mile for them. The cow pictured above is one of those older cows (18+yrs) that holds up well and doesn't look or show her age. She has maintained her body condition while simply running on good pasture. She calves regularly and breeds back quickly. As a matter of fact she calved not long after this photo was taken and bred back 25 days after calving. So she is one of those easy keeping older cows. Not all older cows are this easy to care for but they can be worth the effort.

There are a few simple things that I feel a breeder can do to help these older cows out in hopes of getting a few more calves on the ground from them.

- ❖ First off evaluate the condition of your older cattle in the spring and fall or more often.
  - Check the condition of teeth.
  - Body condition (should be checked regularly)

After checking their teeth and body condition you can better decide on the best source of nutrition. If their teeth are worn-down, missing or broken then you will probably need to start them on a supplemental feeding program. Make sure the feed and hay that you are providing them with is easy for them to chew. I.E. a textured feed. Feeds such as cubes, large stemmed hay or tall tough pasture grass would not be a suitable feed for cattle with poor teeth. The feed should have a protein level of 12% to 14% and in my opinion, it is best that the protein be from a natural source, not from urea. Cattle with bad teeth can do poorly and lose body condition on a pasture full of grass if the grass is tall and tough. They will fare much better on a pasture in the spring time or that has been recently mowed, the grass is tender making it easy for them to graze with what teeth they have left.

- Feed loose Minerals and Vitamins free choice.

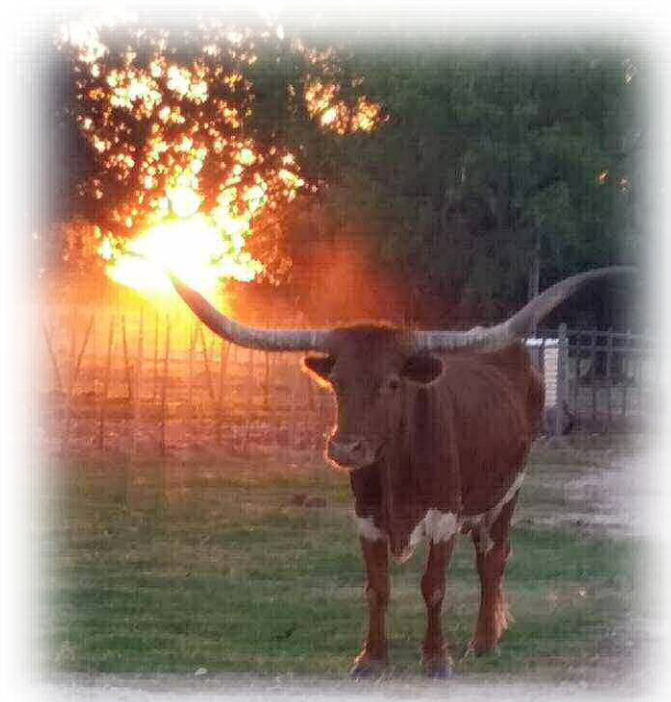
All cattle should have free choice access to a good quality loose mineral with vitamins, in my opinion. Mineral blocks are not sufficient. Older animals can benefit even more from a good mineral program. I also like using a shot of MultiMin 90(R) to help them maintain a balance of minerals/vitamins. A lot of minerals and vitamins work in concert with each other, so increasing one without its counterpart doesn't offer as much benefit to the treated animal.

- ❖ Next check joints for swelling and signs of arthritis. Do they move around freely or do they have stiffness when walking or getting up from laying down?

By checking for any signs of arthritis you will be able to determine if the animal is able to continue to forage in larger or rougher pastures. If there is an indication of the onset of arthritis then you might need to set up a "granny pasture" to house your older cattle. This pasture should be small and one that would be easier for them to travel around. This will also make it easier for the cattle to receive any additional supplemental feeding that they may require without having to fight other stronger cattle for the feed. They will also need to have access to some kind of shelter or windbreak, manmade or created by mother nature depending on the area that you live.

- ❖ Have their reproductive status checked.

If they are still breeding then you need to plan for the calves to arrive when the pastures and weather are good. It is real hard on older cows to nurse a calf in the late fall or winter even when receiving supplemental feeding. They are working to maintain their body condition, maintain their body temperature in the cold weather as well as produce milk for a nursing calf. All this can put a real strain on older cattle which can cause them to go down. So keep that in mind as you try to get that "one more" calf out of that special old cow.



**Rest In Peace Nike @ 19yrs**

- ❖ For a lot of folks the hardest part of owning older cattle is knowing when to let them go. When their quality of life is no longer good it may be time. It's a hard decision to make but one that has to be made if you choose to keep older cattle around rather than selling them before they hit those teen years. The cow pictured above had a good life until arthritis in her knees and hips made getting up and down almost impossible. We made the tough call to put her down before she was completely down, immobile and suffering. These are just a few tips to try and help breeders maintain and get the most out of older cattle.