

The Magnificent Seven

Dr. Mike Settles documents
the breed's longest-horned cows



by Dr. Mike Settles

The famous Butler cow, Beauty, was the longest-horned Texas Longhorn cow of her time. In 1977, Darol Dickinson and Booster Stephenson measured her at 59½ inches. Later it was reported, but not documented, that she had surpassed 60 inches before breaking off her left horn at the base. Regardless of whether Beauty measured 59½ inches as documented or over 60 inches as reported, her horn span was unprecedented at that time. And, as of now, she is still unequaled.

Today we are seeing more and more horn in our top cattle. Three of the seven cows featured in this article will pass 60 inches within the next two to three years.

Unsurpassed: No other Longhorn cow has touched Beauty's record horns.

Twist 21, owned by Crockett and Dorothy Leyendecker, is the longest-horned female of our breed alive today, measuring 58⅝ inches. And though 13 years of age, she will no doubt make 60 inches because she is so close.

Johnnie Hoffman's Delta Diamond and Ben Settles & Sons' Anita run a close second and third to Twist 21. However, because they are young and still show good horn growth, each should reach and surpass 60 inches easily. And YO Samson Rosilla 956, at age nine, also has a fair chance of making 60 inches. Horn growth, of course, slows considerably as cows age. Because Lady Butler, Measles and YO Samson Josefina 706 (Favor-

ite) are 13 and 14 years of age, it is doubtful whether they will ever reach 60 inches. But for horn lovers, they are a majestic sight to behold.

I am a horn lover. We breed for horns in our herd. But we, like most progressive Texas Longhorn breeders, also insist on high standards of conformation and production. This article focuses solely on tip-to-tip horn measurement. Since some of the featured cows are in varying degrees lacking in color, conformation and/or productivity, I in no way mean to imply that the seven longest-horned Texas Longhorn cows are simultaneously the breed's most valuable females. On the other hand, those few females which combine color, conformational perfection and a quality production record to go with their huge horns are worth a fortune. 1985 sales of percentages of the Anita and Measles cows place their value in the quarter of a million dollar range.

Several months ago, I asked Alan Sparger, Darol Dickinson and Tom Wickland, whom I hold in high regard as Texas Longhorn authorities, to help me identify the longest-horned cows alive today. Then the *Texas Longhorn Journal* (January/February 1985) asked breeders to contact me if they had a cow with a tip-to-tip horn span of at least 54½ inches. I was surprised that each of the breed's longest-horned females was on the original list that Alan, Darol, Tom and I had compiled and disappointed that several of the cows which reportedly measured 54½ inches or better actually measured as little as 48¾ inches when my tape was stretched across their horns. Several times I thought about shooting the cow for not making the grade, as well as its owner for leading me on a wild goose chase. But upon cooler reflection, I decided only the owner deserved to be shot.

The seven cows that made the list were owned by breeders in Texas, Louisiana and Colorado. However, I was very fortunate in that each of them happened to be within a two-hour drive of San Antonio when the official measuring was done. I measured Twist 21 at the Leyendecker ranch near Columbus, Tex. Delta

Diamond, Anita, Lady Butler, YO Samson Rosilla 956 and Favorite were in embryo at Rio Vista, just outside San Antonio, and Measles was in embryo at Medina Valley in Castroville, just ten minutes from Rio Vista. The cows were very cooperative when we measured them, and I can certify that

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the measurements are absolutely accurate. Furthermore, in each instance, the measurements were witnessed.

When most breeders think of horns, they think of the Butler line of cattle. And while Delta Diamond, Anita and Lady Butler were sired by Butler bulls, Lady Butler is the only cow among the seven that is straight Butler. There is actually more WR blood than Butler in the “Magnificent Seven.” Measles is the only straight WR cow, but four of the others are at least half WR, including the three longest-horned females in the breed today. It is interesting that so much WR blood flows through the veins of our longest-horned cows yet so little of it is found in our longest-horned bulls. Coincidentally, it is interesting to note that two of the top seven cows, the YO cows, were sired by YO Samson 239, who, on his finest day, never had more than 39½-inch horns. Indeed, if you'll study the pedigrees carefully, you will see that none of the bulls except Monarch, sire of Delta Diamond, had exceptional horns. At the same time, though, all of the dams were superior cows.

I offer a salute to our longest-horned females and a reminder to all that they did not make the list unchallenged. Just slightly behind were Swamp Lady, Sweet 'N Low and Archer's Pepper. Furthermore, in five years, I predict the seven cows on the list will each be 60 inches or better and such legends as Lady Butler, Measles, Favorite and YO Samson Rosilla 956 will be replaced by a new generation of younger superstars named Sweet 'N Low, Monarch's Dolly, Legend (formerly named Classic Bread), Lady Luck, Joyful Expectations, Classic Nutmeg, and/or Bold Classic Rose.

Read on for more specifics on the ages, breeding, progeny and ownership of today's “Magnificent Seven.”

Cow	Horns	D.O.B.	Owner
1. Twist 21	58⅞"	1972	Crockett Leyendecker
2. Delta Diamond	57½"	1980	Johnnie Hoffman
3. Anita	56½"	1978	Ben Settles & Sons
4. Lady Butler	55½"	1972	Wiley Knight
5. Measles	55⅜"	1971	H. C. Carter/Red McCombs
6. YO Samson Rosilla 956	55¼"	1976	Y.O. Ranch
7. YO Samson Josefina 706	55"	1971	Tom Brundage/Robert Harrell



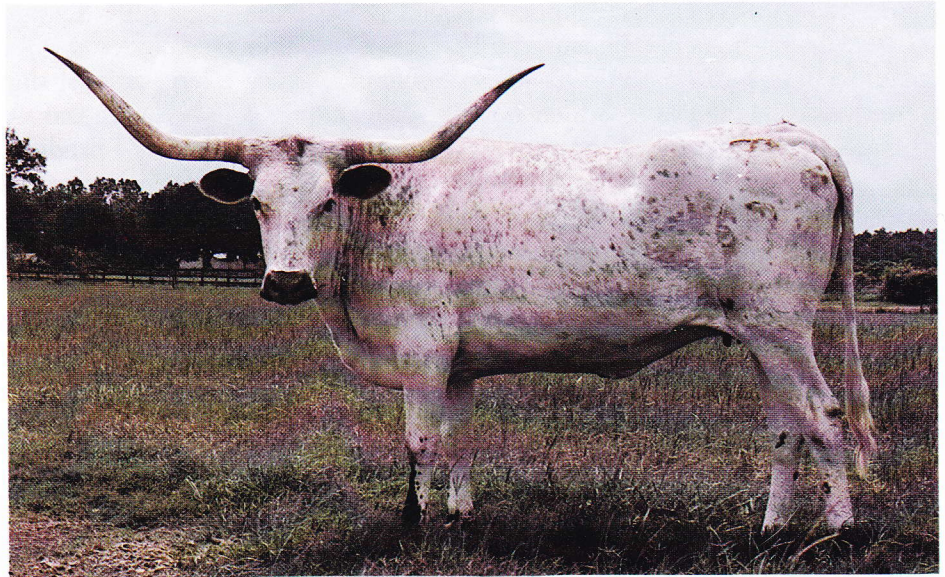
Twist 21

Crockett Leyendecker has several very impressive sets of horns mounted on the walls of his real estate office in Columbus, Tex., that remind him of some of the top cattle he once owned. But a severe outbreak of Brucellosis in 1982 forced Leyendecker to send 23 of his 40 cows to the killer! Fortunately, both Twist 21 and her dam, Miss Twist #1, were unaffected.

Twist 21 is the result of a WR-Marks cross. Her sire was WR 2386, a bull that Crockett purchased off the Refuge in 1967. And her dam, still living and still producing at age 24, is a 48-inch cow that was purchased from E. H. Marks as a yearling heifer in 1961. Their 1972 daughter, Twist 21, is the longest-horned

Texas Longhorn female alive today. She and Favorite are also the largest of the seven featured cows, at 1,050 pounds.

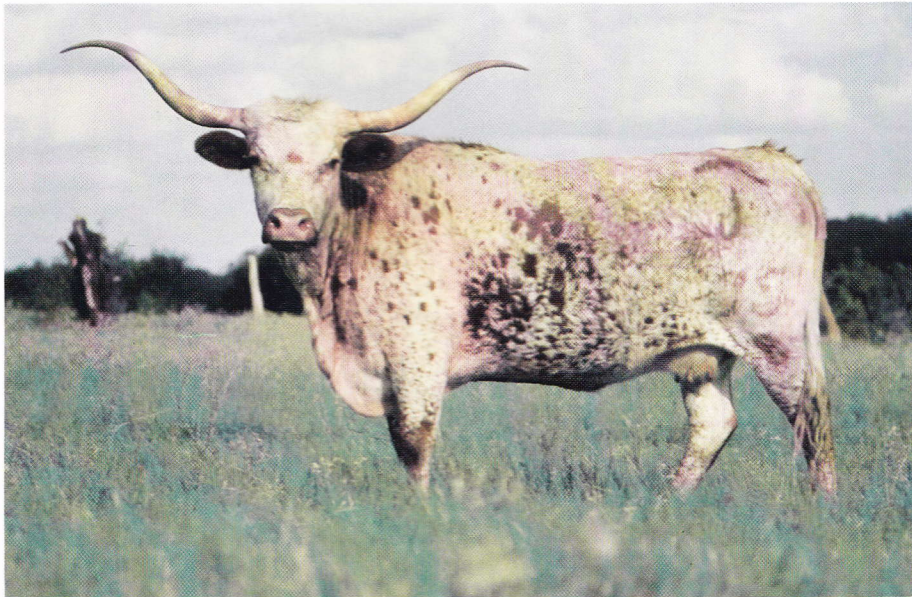
Twist looks absolutely great at age thirteen. Her light red color is not particularly eye-catching, but after looking at her gigantic horns, you won't be able to remember what color she was anyway. Furthermore, she stands tall, is very clean, and has exemplary conformation. The Leyendeckers call her "Beauty," and that's exactly what she is. She has been worked successfully in embryo at Spring Creek by Brad Stroud. Robert Harrell and John Duncan have purchased Twist embryos by WR 3760 and 505 and Bud Adams and Tom Brundage are standing in line to buy her next pregnancies by Monarch.



Delta Diamond

Delta Diamond is the youngest of the "magnificent seven" by two years, but is already the second-longest-horned female in the breed. She was calved in January 1980, by Monarch out of Johnnie Hoffman's WR-branded "Pearl" cow. Johnnie bought Pearl from Bobby Hyde in 1977. After breeding her to several different bulls with good results, he returned to the bull by which he got spectacular results—Monarch. Hoffman maintains that Pearl's 1984 Monarch daughter is going to be even better than Diamond. If so, she'll be incredible!

Although Delta Diamond is half-WR, she has a distinct Butler look—white coloring, thin face, fine bone and a massive set of horns. She is a very clean, feminine cow with excellent legs. When poor, she shows a trace of a weak back. But right now, she is in great shape and looks beautiful. Though Diamond has not yet worked in embryo, her 1984 natural calf by Dixie Hunter is gorgeous. Tom Brundage private-treaty-purchased the red-speckled heifer last year as a weanling for \$15,000, and she is now one of the three best calves in his fine herd. Delta Diamond is currently bred back to Dixie Hunter.



Anita

Anita is the TLBAA's 1985 Grand Champion Cow. She is young and combines quality production with a gentle disposition, flashy red roan color, perfect conformation and magnificent 56½-inch horns. She was featured on the cover of the March/April 1985 *Texas Longhorn Journal*. David Langford has called her "the most perfect Texas Longhorn female that I have ever photographed," and Johnnie Hoffman, who certainly owns his fair share of beautiful cattle, has declared that "Anita is the prettiest cow that I have ever laid eyes on."

Equally impressive, but more important as far as I am concerned, is her quality production record. J. W. Isaacs swears that

his two Anita daughters are going to be even better than their dam. Alan Baribeau's 1983 Anita daughter won every show she was entered in this year—South Texas, North Texas/Oklahoma, and the National Finals. And, of course, because of the consistent quality, Anita calves have commanded high prices. H. C. Carter paid \$27,000 for two fancy Anita x 3S Hondo's Remarkable embryo heifers; John Duncan paid \$10,000 for an Anita x Dixie Hunter embryo that has turned into his best heifer; and Alan Baum purchased Anita's 1985 natural heifer calf by Classic for \$12,000. Overall, Anita embryos have sold for an average of \$9,175, and her calves for an even \$12,000 average.

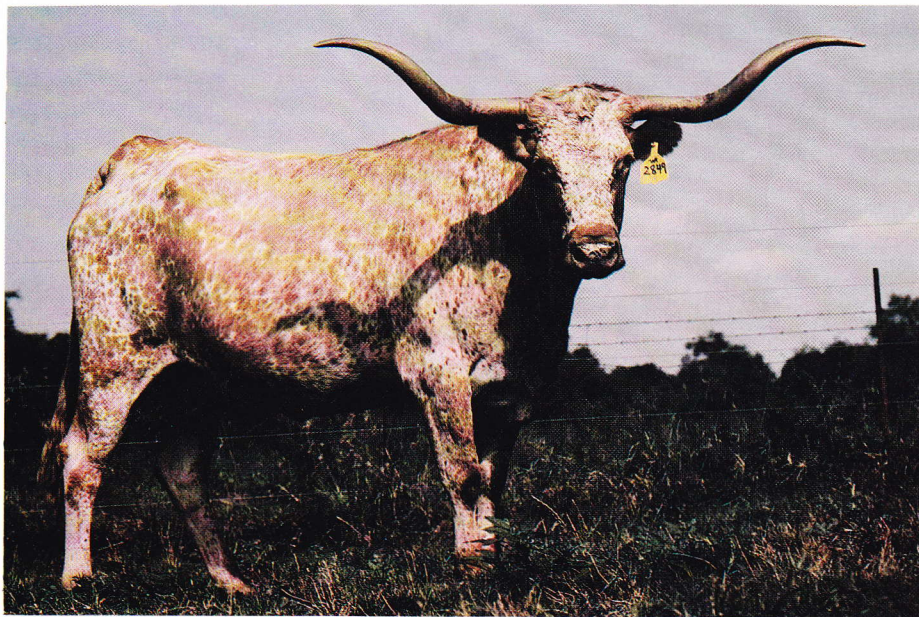


Lady Butler

When Wiley Knight's great-grandfather came to Texas just prior to the Civil War, he caught wild horses and Longhorn cattle for a living. The Knight family has retained a small number of those original cattle up until the present. Wiley purchased a brindle cow from his father and then sought to purchase a bull from a neighbor, Pauline Russell, of Liberty, Tex. Although Mrs. Russell at first refused to part with any of her prized Butler cattle, she later was forced to sell her small herd after losing her cattle lease. The Russells advised Knight to buy a young red-and-white bull out of their favorite cow, Beauty. When the cattle were sold commercially at auction in the summer of 1977, Wiley Knight bought both the Beauty son and a daughter. The son was Butler Boy and the daughter Lady Butler.

Lady Butler is the fourth-longest-horned cow in the breed. She is solid white and has a deep, swayed back that was typical of many of the Texas Longhorns of yesteryear. Her head is feminine and, of course, she has a magnificent set of severely-twisted 55½-inch horns. Lady Butler's horns are very similar to Beauty's. And of the seven featured cows, Lady Butler and YO Samson Rosilla 956 have by far the most twist to their horns.

Lady Butler has not been a producer in embryo, but she has had three natural bulls and two heifers. The Knights have kept both females and the top bull calf, Double Butler. Lady Butler is now bred to a Butler Boy son of Wiley Knight's Party Girl cow named Fancy Butler.

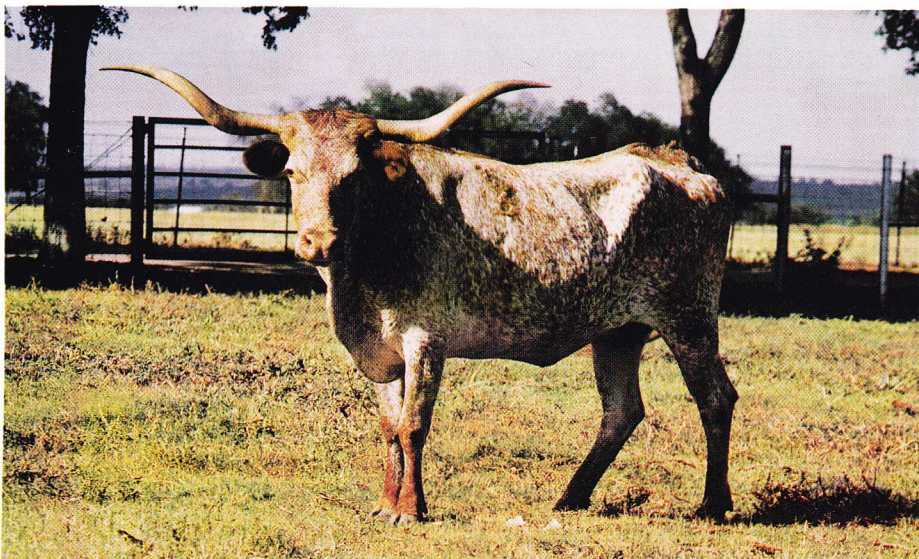


Measles

The Measles cow, I believe, is the best-known Texas Longhorn female alive today. For years, she was the standard of excellence in the breed. She is a large-framed cow, weighing 1,025. Measles is a beautiful red roan color. She shows excellent balance, a strong back, good udder and good length of leg. She also has a very feminine head, topped with graceful 55 $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch horns that are perfectly symmetrical. Measles has produced well, particularly with Texas Ranger. Among her progeny are Ranger's Measles, Cheetah, Texas Measles, Mr. Measles, Texas Ranger Jr. and Measles Super Ranger.

Darol Dickinson bought Measles at the Wichita Refuge as a weanling calf, for \$170. Eight years later, in 1979, he sold her at the National Western in Denver for \$17,000, which, at that time,

was the highest price ever paid at public auction for a Texas Longhorn female. Jack Montgomery and his partners were the purchasers. Montgomery later bought out his partners and kept the Measles cow as the star of his fine herd. H. C. Carter purchased a 10 percent share in Measles at the 1984 Texas Legacy. Later, Red McCombs private-treaty-purchased an additional 20 percent of Measles, then he and Carter together bought ownership of the remaining 70 percent just prior to the Montgomery dispersal this summer. The price was reported to have been in the quarter-of-a million-dollar range. Measles is currently working successfully in embryo at Medina Valley in Castroville, Tex., just west of San Antonio.



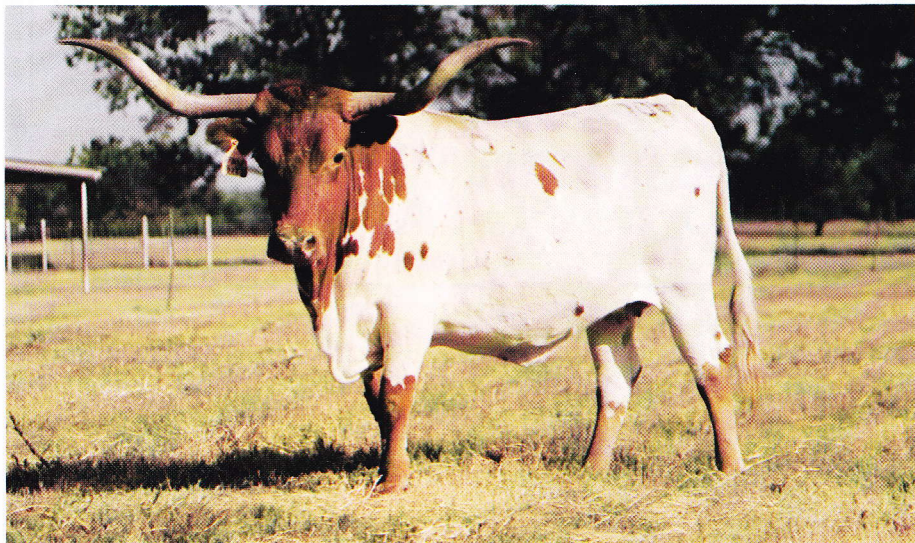
YO Samson Rosilla 956

In 1968, Charles Schreiner III purchased several twist-horned cows from Cap Yates. The Y.O. Ranch then bred them to one of their top bulls, YO Samson 239. One of the original straight Yates cows, YO Rosilla 192, had a heifer calf in 1976 that has become the Y.O.'s longest-horned cow at 55 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. She is YO Samson Rosilla 956.

The 956 cow shows the same twist in her horns as her dam. She may not have as much total horn as the other featured cows, but because her horns are in a tight, spiraling twist and go straight out, she attains a very impressive overall tip-to-tip spread. YO Samson Rosilla 956 is the smallest cow of the magnificent seven. She shows a slight weakness in her back, but she is well-

balanced, feminine, and exceptionally clean. By nature, she is very gentle and passive, even shy, which makes her very difficult to photograph. If you can catch her properly posed, her beautiful red roan coloring certainly adds to the picture.

Red McCombs has purchased the first two flushes offered from YO Samson Rosilla 956, and although she has not yet worked in embryo, McCombs is hopeful because of the quality of 956's natural calves. The Y.O. has a three-year-old 956 daughter, YO Texas Rose 1746, that has 41-inch horns, and an excellent four-year-old, YO Rosilla Samson 1493, that already has 47-inch horns. YO Samson Rosilla 956 is currently in embryo at Rio Vista. She is being worked to Bold Ruler.



YO Samson Josefina 706

YO Samson Josefina 706 was also sired by YO Samson 239. Her dam was YO Josefina, an outstanding WR-bred cow. She was one of two heifers that Alan Sparger obtained from the Y.O. Ranch in 1973 in a trade for three Bowie knives. Because of her grace and unusual horn development, Alan Sparger III dubbed her his "favorite." When the Spargers sold Favorite at the June 1980 Y.O. Sale, L. D. Brinkman purchased her for \$26,000, the highest price ever paid for a Texas Longhorn cow at that time. John Roberts acquired Favorite in the 1981 private treaty purchase of Brinkman's herd. Harrell & Sons then paid \$35,000 for a third-interest in Favorite in the 1984 Texas Legacy

and shortly afterwards, Tom Brundage purchased the remaining two-thirds-interest for \$79,000 when John Roberts dispersed.

Favorite was one of the first Texas Longhorns ever used in embryo transfer. All four of her 1980 embryo daughters by Texas Ranger are now themselves donors. Plus, she has worked spectacularly well with Classic. Her 1980 Classic son, 3S Classic Favorite, has 54-inch horns and is one of the very best Classic sons in the breed. And a 1983 embryo daughter by Classic, 3S Favorite Beauty 623, which brought \$12,750 from Robert Harrell at the 1984 Lamb-Sparger dispersal, is as fine as any two-year-old that you will ever see. Favorite currently has a Texas Ranger heifer at side. 