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HEREFORDS — THE EFFICIENCY EXPERTS

SEPTEMBER 2011



Tigerstriped Value

The F1 “tigerstripe” Hereford-Brahman cross female is a superior cow for the South.

These guys know tigerstripe females. If you add them together, Tom Johnson, Mike Armitage and Jay Wright sell approximately 10,000 head of F1 tigerstripe females each year.

Tom Johnson, Wortham, Texas, sells at least 7,500 head of F1 tigerstripe females each year for himself and customers through his marketing business, and maintains a 300-head cow herd of tigerstripe cows. He’s the largest marketer of tigerstripe females.

Mike Armitage, Claremore, Okla., started his commercial cow operation with tigerstripes in 1994, and he continues to buy, add value to, and sell between 1,500 and 2,000 head of tigerstripe females each year.



Jay Wright manages W4 Ranch, Morgan, Texas, where Hereford seedstock and F1 replacement females are raised.

All three agree that the F1 tigerstripe female is a superior cow for the South and Southeast.

What is a tigerstripe?

“Tigerstripe” is a term used to describe the F1 cross of Hereford and Brahman because of the animal’s tiger-like striped brindle hair. The cross is traditionally known to combine the beefier Hereford of English descent with the more heat-tolerant *Bos indicus* Brahman.

What’s the advantage?

These F1 tigerstripes are ideally suited to hot and humid climates, Wright says. “They will get out and chase what feed is there better than the straightbred cattle; they are more heat tolerant and withstand that kind of climate a whole lot better.”

Armitage says they work really well in his environment where sore feet and eye trouble are management issues related to the climate and conditions. “They fit our country real well in central and south Texas where the climate and the terrain demand that you have some Brahman influence,” Johnson says.

Comparing tigerstripes to straight Brahman is where the difference really shows. “Your breed-back is going to

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be a lot better with F1s, and there's more performance in those cattle as far as weaning weight and yearling weight. And the cattle are going to feed much better and grade a lot better," Johnson says.

One of the biggest advantages, though, is longevity. "Real-world ranchers know that the F1 female will outlive and be productive three to five years longer than a straight English animal because of the Brahman influence," Armitage says.

Wright adds, "You'll get maybe 10 to 12 years out of a straight-bred cow. I've seen F1s that will last up to 20 years."

And Johnson's cows prove it. "This week I shipped some packer cows, and some of the cows were 19 and 20 years old and have raised a calf every year. For a cow to last 18 or 19 years and not miss any calves and still have a few teeth in their head is pretty remarkable."

Not only do the cows last 18 or 19 years, but they raise growthy calves as well. "Tigerstripes will consistently wean from 30 to 50 lb. heavier weights than any other cross in this region," Armitage says.

Johnson explains, "When you breed Brahman to Hereford, you're breeding cold to hot. You get kind of a genetic explosion, and that extra jolt of hybrid vigor just makes a cow that is a real heavy milker and can function in some pretty tough environments."

Are they wild?

Many cattlemen believe Brahman or cattle with "ear" to be wild and unmanageable. Armitage says that isn't the case. "If they're managed properly and handled correctly horseback, they can be the simplest cows to handle and are much smarter than the average bovine. But I don't recommend them to the guys that have portable panels and a four-wheeler. The main difference is you don't need to touch these cows but twice a year. They take care of themselves."

Johnson agrees, "With that tick of Brahman in them they are going to have a little different disposition. It's all in the way you cowboy and how you handle them. We do everything horseback and our cattle work well horseback. You are going to get some (wild ones) every once in a while but those need to be culled anyway. The less time they have to spend in a set of pens the better off they are, and you are too."

Where's the market?

Cattlemen do find one disadvantage to the F1 tigerstripe cow. As of now, there is not a great marketing outlet for feeder calves with Brahman influence. Even if they are 50% or more Hereford they are not eligible for Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) and are sometimes discounted at sale barns.

Wright has developed a relationship with feeder calf buyers who appreciate his F1 calves. "The misconception



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is that those Brahman-cross steers won't feed as well as straightbred cattle, but that is not entirely true in my opinion. They'll buy them because they come from here and they know they are taken care of, had their shots and everything. And they say they're feeding as well as straightbred cattle."

Johnson hopes that a niche market like CHB will be developed for Hereford-Brahman cross feeder cattle to help maintain and develop the market for Hereford bulls in his area, because many of his customers are using Hereford bulls on F1 tigerstripe cows and taking a discount when the calves are marketed.

But, the good news is the heifers are in high demand for replacement females. Johnson breeds his F1 cows to Brangus bulls and enjoys a good marketplace for his heifer calves for replacements. "I probably get beat up a little on my steers because they get a little too much navel on them and too much ear. But the heifer side of it surpasses and makes up for that."

Armitage says, "The reason for the tigerstripe's value is partly due to the simple laws of supply and demand. There's not many of those females available in this region. We find that in northeast Oklahoma the tigerstripe is our

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— Tom Johnson

top seller, they will outsell the very best Angus cattle in this region. We buy (tigerstripes) as heifers or young cows in whole-herd liquidations primarily out of Texas, mate them to Angus or Charolais bulls and market them through one of our sales."

Armitage Livestock organizes about five commercial female sales annually with 800-3,000 head sold at each event located throughout northeast Oklahoma, Missouri and Arkansas.

As the largest marketer of tigerstripes, Johnson buys no less than 2,000 head of open heifer calves each year, usually about 550-600 lb., straightens them out, groups them by weight and resells them. His company,

Johnson Cattle Marketing, also sells about 1,400-1,500 head of primarily tigerstripes at six sales in south Texas throughout the year, in addition to order buying and marketing F1s for ranches like W4.

In fact, Johnson organizes W4's annual production sale where about 150 F1 tigerstripe replacements are sold each year.

Whether it's raising, managing or marketing females, it's pretty clear these three cattlemen see value in tigerstripes. 🐮

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3.2	2.7	56	112	29	57	3.8	1.8	-0.005	0.40	0.46	30	20	25	38



WHITEHAWK 157K BEEFMAKER 896U

CE	BW	WW	YW	MM	M&G	MCE	SC	FAT	REA	MARB	BMI5	CEZ5	BIIS	CHBS
4.5	2.3	52	85	34	60	3.5	1.5	-0.009	0.32	0.51	28	21	24	36

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Hereford Marketplace is also easily accessible from any page on Hereford.org by clicking on the "Marketplace" link at the top of the page.

A complement to Marketplace is Event Central, which is also listed on the top menu bar on all Hereford.org pages. Event Central includes a listing of all Hereford events and deadlines.

The feeder cattle and commercial female listings are not an online auction. There are no fees, commissions or obligations imposed upon the buyer or the seller. The listing's purpose is to provide buyers with contact names and phone numbers to negotiate directly with the seller or his/her representative.

The service is open to all Hereford and Hereford-influenced feeder cattle and commercial female producers. Producers and/or their representatives can list cattle by completing an online form or by calling the toll-free number (866-437-3638).

Launched in 2009 BuyHereford.com is an online auction website that features regular consignment auctions.

BuyHereford.com

In recent sales, consignments have featured females, bulls, steers, cow-calf pairs, donor dams, embryos, semen, picks of the herd or flush rights. Commercial female lots and groups of feeder calves can also be listed.

Offerings are not just limited to Hereford genetics; consignments can also include equipment such as chutes, trailers, show tack and equipment, or feed.

For more information about BuyHereford.com, contact Dennis Schock, BuyHereford.com manager, at dschock@hereford.org or 903-815-2004. 

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Study Shows \$30 Hereford Heterosis Advantage



Calves sired by Hereford bulls have a \$30 per head documented advantage in feedlot profitability and 7% advantage in fertility when compared to Angus-sired calves, according to a recent research study.

This advantage was documented during a three-year, real-world commercial heterosis project comparing progeny by Hereford and Angus bulls when crossed on Angus-based cows. The study also documented a maternal advantage of 7% higher pregnancy rate when comparing the Hereford-sired females to Angus-sired females.

The American Hereford Association (AHA) recently released the final results of a heterosis study conducted in cooperation with California State University, Chico; Lacey Livestock; Harris Feeding Co.; and Harris Ranch Beef Co. The objective of the research project was to conduct a controlled crossbreeding system, comparing progeny sired by Hereford and Angus bulls, under commercial conditions, emphasizing economic differences at the ranch, feedlot and packing plant.

“The most notable and dramatic difference was the lower feed conversion for the Hereford-sired calves over all three years,” explains Dave Daley, California State University, Chico associate dean and farm administrator. “This fact, coupled with the other feedlot traits, resulted in a significantly lower total cost of gain and breakevens for the Hereford-sired cattle.”

To start the project in 2005, Lacey Livestock identified 400 Angus-based cows that were mated randomly to 10 Hereford bulls or 10 Angus bulls. In years two and three the project was expanded to include 600 cows and 15 bulls of each breed. All calves were identified with

electronic identification (EID) tags and DNA samples were taken to determine parentage. All cattle had equal access to comparable feed resources and management in relatively harsh environments. The differences in weaning performance, feedlot performance, carcass value and overall profitability were measured on the Angus- and Hereford-sired calves.

Because of the length of the project, researchers were only able to collect limited data on reproductive performance. Daley, who led the research project, says this is an area where producers can anticipate the most dramatic response to crossbreeding. “For the majority of cow-calf producers the effect of maternal heterosis is critical to overall profitability,” he adds.

Pregnancy rates on yearling heifers that had been identified back to Hereford or

Angus sires were collected in years two and three of the study. In both instances, there was a 7% advantage in pregnancy to the Hereford-sired cattle (93% vs. 86%) in a relatively short breeding season where heifers were bred with artificial insemination.

“The baldie females are the biggest pay off for us participating in the project,” says Mark Lacey of Lacey Livestock. “It is allowed us to get some heterosis back in our cow herd. In the cattle business, fertility and longevity are what makes us money.

“We want to continue to produce more baldie females,” Mark adds. “As range cows go, I think the Hereford female is a superior range cow and makes a great mother.”

As a result of the project, Mark says his family is continuing to use the Hereford bulls that remain in their bull battery. They also artificially inseminated their black replacement heifers, nearly 250, to two calving-ease Hereford bulls.

“The Harris project includes a real-world economic analysis that favors crossbreeding for the commercial cow-calf producer in our current market structure,” Daley summarizes. “The economic data suggest crossbreeding has the potential to significantly boost return in a vertically coordinated marketing system.”

For a complete report, “Impacts of Crossbreeding on Profitability in Vertically Coordinated Beef Industry Marketing Systems Final Report,” visit Hereford.org/HarrisHeterosisProject or contact Angie Stump Denton, AHA director of communications, at adenton@hereford.org or 785-363-7263. 



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