



HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED
WHY BRAHMAN IS CALLED
“CROSSBREEDING’S
COMMON DENOMINATOR?”

THE AMERICAN BRAHMAN
REVIEW TAKES A LOOK AT
HOW BRAHMANS EARNED
THIS TRADEMARKED NAME...

BRAHMAN: **THE** **COMMON** **DENOMINATOR**

IN BEEF CROSSBREEDING

Brahmans are nicknamed crossbreeding's common denominator because of their importance in the modern beef crossbreeding in the United States. As cattlemen began using crossbreeding as a tool for adding hybrid vigor, Brahmans were the breed of choice. Thus, today, there are numerous recognized U.S. beef breeds that derived their foundation bloodlines from the American Brahman.

CROSSBREEDING PROVIDES BENEFITS TO CATTLEMEN

Crossbreeding allows cattlemen to combine the positive traits of different breeds of cattle in ways that complement each other. Second, and possibly the most important for a breeder's profitability, is the increased level of performance that results from crossing two unrelated breeds: heterosis.

Cattle have been domesticated for over 8,500 years, according to the Oklahoma State University Breeds of Livestock Project. Early cattle served a triple purpose of providing meat, milk and labor to their owners. As horses became more popular for work, cattle evolved into dual purpose animals, providing meat, milk, or both.

As one of the first *Bos indicus* breeds, the Brahman originated from the crossing of Indian cattle, and offered remarkable adaptations for survival in tropical climates and conditions through disease, parasite, and heat resistance. As cattlemen in the southern U.S. began searching for crossbreeding options to add survival traits to their *Bos taurus* cattle, the Brahman was a natural fit.

Interest in using Brahman to form other breeds started almost as soon as significant numbers of *Bos indicus* were imported in the early 1900's, says Dr. Steve Hammack, professor and beef cattle specialist emeritus at Texas A&M University.

Early Brahman breeders like Captain John Keeran, Shanghai Peirce, J.W. Sartwelle, and J.D. Hudgins crossed Brahman cattle with the native coastal cattle and saw immediate improvement. Their foresight was evidenced as many cattle along the southern gulf coast began to show evidence of *Bos indicus* use in the early 1900s.

"The concept of using Brahman cattle in crossbreeding to improve performance really took off before World War II," says Hammack.

"Right after World War II, research became available that documented the advantages of Brahman blood in the South."



BEEFMASTER: ½ BRAHMAN; ¼ HEREFORD; ¼ SHORTHORN

WHAT IS HETEROSIS?

Heterosis – or hybrid vigor – is a phenomenon that causes crossbred individuals to have an increased level of performance for certain traits over and above the average performance of their straight bred parents, according to Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service's Crossbreeding Beef Cattle I publication.

For example, research conducted at the Agricultural Research Center in Ona, Florida compiled by the University of Florida found that crosses of Brahman x Angus, Brahman x Hereford, and Brahman x Shorthorn calves weighed 17.2 to 21 percent above the average of straightbred parental breeds.

"Research with Brahman and Angus crosses at the experiment station in Jeanerette, Louisiana established the formula of 5/8-3/8 as the proposed optimum formula," he explained. "The experiments with Brahman and Hereford crosses at the experiment station in Lufkin, Texas all had early implications on the popularity of Brahman in crossbreeding."

While no breed is superior to another, the Brahman breed offered many advantages in southern climates, and thus, was the primary breed used in crossbreeding. Currently, the OSU Breeds of Livestock Database lists 15 breeds of beef cattle in the United States that trace their foundation to Brahman genetics.

BEEFMASTER

The Beefmaster was developed by Ed Lasater in 1908, when he purchased Brahman bulls to use on his commercial herd of Hereford and Shorthorn cattle. Following his death in 1930, the breeding operations came under the direction of his son, Tom Lasater, who began to combine Brahman and Hereford bloodlines with a few registered Shorthorn bulls. After making crosses of Brahman-Hereford and Brahman-Shorthorn, he felt a superior animal had been produced and called the cattle "Beefmaster."

The exact pedigree of the foundation herd was not known, since Lasater's breeding operations were carried on in multiple-sire herds. Modern Beefmasters have slightly less than one-half Brahman blood and slightly more than one-fourth of Hereford and Shorthorn blood.

The Beefmaster breed, which now registers nearly 15,000 head of cattle annually, is based on the concepts of the sx essentials: weight, conformation, milking ability, fertility, hardiness and disposition.

BRAFORD

Brafords were created out of the necessity to produce a uniform product in specific production environments. Working with a base of Brahman cows and Hereford bulls, Alto Adams, Jr., a

Florida cattleman, began using this cross in 1947. He then began experimenting with various types of Brahman x Hereford cross bulls, and eventually identified the Braford cross as his ideal beef animal. These animals were recognized as the Foundation Herd of the Braford breed in the United States. Braford cattle are approximately 3/8 Brahman and 5/8 Hereford. The first Braford registry was created in 1969 in Florida, and later moved to Texas in 1991. Brafords are known for maternal ability, fertility, calving ease, and productive longevity — many traits derived from their Brahman influence.

BRANGUS & RED BRANGUS

The Brangus breed was developed to utilize the superior traits of Angus and Brahman. Brahman was chosen for disease resistance, maternal instincts, and overall hardiness, and then combined with the carcass qualities of Angus. According to the USDA 1935 Yearbook in Agriculture, the Brahman x Angus cross began in the early 1930s at the USDA Experiment Station in Jeanerette, Louisiana. The Brangus association registry was created in 1949 and today registers over 20,000 head annually. To be considered for registration, Brangus cattle must be 3/8 Brahman and 5/8 Angus, solid black, and polled.

SANTA GERTRUDIS

The Santa Gertrudis breed was developed by King Ranch of Kingsville, Texas. In the early 1910s, Tom O’Conner gave a half blood Brahman x Shorthorn bull to King Ranch. This bull produced such outstanding calves that the ranch became interested in crossing Shorthorns and Brahmans.

Since few purebred Brahmans were available at that time, King Ranch purchased 52 of the best three-year-old bulls they could obtain from the Pierce herd. These bulls were 3/4 to 7/8 Brahman. The bulls were divided among eight different herds and mated to approximately 2,500 Shorthorn cows. Two of the better bulls, “Chiltipin” and “Vinotero,” were specifically selected and pasture mated to 50 cows each.

One of the females in the Vinotero bull’s group was a milk cow with 1/16 Brahman blood that she carried as a descendant of the O’Connor bull. The result of this mating was a bull called Monkey, who became the foundation sire of the Santa Gertrudis. All present day Santa Gertrudis cattle descend from Monkey.

The name Santa Gertrudis derives from Rincon de Santa Gertrudis, which was name of the original land grant purchased by Captain Richard King where the first headquarters of the King Ranch was established.

In 1940, the United States Department of Agriculture recognized the Santa Gertrudis as a breed. Modern Santa Gertrudis cattle are approximately 5/8 Shorthorn and 3/8 Brahman. The Santa Gertrudis breed registry is located in Kingsville, and registers approximately 7,500 head annually.



SANTA GERTRUDIS: 3/8 BRAHMAN; 5/8 SHORTHORN

SIMBRAH

An experiment combining Simmental with Brahman that began in the pastures of a few dedicated cattlemen in the late 1960s evolved into the breed known as Simbrah. The first registration of a Simbrah animal occurred in 1977. The Brahman breed contributed heat and insect tolerance, hardiness, excellent foraging ability, maternal calving ease and longevity. The Simmental complements these traits with fertility, milking ability, rapid growth and good beef characteristics.

The Simbrah registry is kept by the American Simmental Association, located in Bozeman, Montana. The purebred Simbrah consist of 5/8 Simmental and 3/8 Brahman.

POPULAR BREEDS DEVELOPED USING BRAHMAN GENETICS

Braford
Beefmaster
Brahmousin
Braler
Brangus
Charbray
Droughtmaster
Gelbray
Red Brangus
Santa Gertrudis
Simbrah

BUILDING NEW FOUNDATION BLOODLINES WITH BRAHMAN

Over the last few years, several American breeds have come back to Brahman ranches to purchase new foundation genetics for breeding up programs. The American breeds steer cross is also a very popular utilization of Brahman crossbreeding.

Cattlemen continue to recognize the value of crossbreeding with Brahman genetics in the southern United States, as their #1 source of hybrid vigor and efficiency. For more information about Brahman genetics, or where to purchase Brahman cattle from ABBA members, visit [www. Brahman.org](http://www.Brahman.org).

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