

# Brahman

## History

The Brahman breed (also known as Brahma) originated from *Bos indicus* cattle from India.



Three principal strains of Indian cattle were brought to the United States and used in the development of the Brahman breed; the Guzerat, the Nelore and Gir. The Krishna Valley strain was also introduced and used but to a lesser extent.

Today, its use in crossbreeding has become a great tool for the production of steers for various purposes. Its meat is highly appreciated in the five continents.

## Distribution

The Brahman is very popular and has been exported from the USA to many beef cattle producing countries including Argentina, Paraguay, Mexico, Brazil, South Africa and Australia.

## Characteristics

Brahman is characterized by a large hump over the top of the shoulder and neck.

Brahmans vary in colour from very light grey or red to almost black. A majority of the breed are light to medium grey. Mature bulls are normally darker than cows and usually have dark areas on the neck, shoulders and lower thighs.

They have short, thick, glossy hair

Their horns curve upwards and sometimes tilt to the rear

They have pendulous ears.

Brahman have an abundance of loose skin which is thought to contribute to its ability to withstand warm weather by increasing the body surface area exposed to cooling.

Brahmans are intermediate in size among beef breeds. Bulls will generally weigh from 1600 to 2200 pounds and cows from 1000 to 1400 pounds in average condition. The calves are small at birth, weighing 60 to 65 pounds, but grow very rapidly and wean at weights comparable to other breeds.

Brahmans are intelligent, inquisitive and shy. They are unusually thrifty, hardy and adaptable to

a wide range of feed and climate.

They are also good mothers and produce a very satisfactory milk flow under conditions that are adverse for best performance of the European breeds.

They have established a considerable reputation for a high dressing percentage.

## Hereford

### History

Herefords have taken their name from the county Herefordshire, an historic agricultural region of England where this breed has evolved.



Herefords were the first English cattle to be recognised as a true breed.

### Characteristics

The modern Hereford is coloured dark red to red-yellow, with a white face, crest, dewlap, and underline.

Herefords with white flanks and white markings below the knees and hocks are also common.

Most animals have short thick horns that typically curve down at the sides of the head, but there is a polled strain in North America and UK (**Polled Hereford**).

Mature males may weigh up to 1,800 pounds, while mature females may weigh around 1,200. They are muscular, moderate to long in length of side, adequate in length of leg, large in size, trim, and smooth. They are also well developed in the regions of valuable cuts - the back, loin, and hind quarters or round.

These cattle are known for their vigor and foraging ability and for their longevity, many females live and produce calves beyond the age of 15 years. Bulls are capable of remaining profitable at stud to the age of 12 or more. Many breeders keep their elderly cattle until they die of natural causes.



Herefords are generally docile and fast growing cattle with good beef quality.

### **Statistics**

- Greater weight for age and rate of gain either at pasture or on yard feeding
- The ability to command top prices in the markets as finished beef or as store cattle
- A higher selling price for breeding stock
- Greater economy of gain in feeding
- High percentage of calf crops
- Lower wintering costs
- Docility and ease of management
- Lower labour costs
- Early maturity and longevity

### **Distribution**

More than five million pedigree Herefords exist in over 50 countries. The export of Herefords began in 1817, spreading across the United States and Canada through Mexico to the great beef-raising countries of South America.

## **Angus**

### **History**

The Aberdeen Angus breed (or Angus as it is known internationally) was developed in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century from the polled and predominantly black cattle of North east Scotland known locally as "doddies" and "hummlies".



### **Characteristics**

Aberdeen Angus cattle are naturally polled and can be black or red in colour although black is the dominant colour, white may occasionally appear on the udder.

They are resistant to harsh weather, undemanding, adaptable, good natured, mature extremely early and have a high carcass yield with nicely marbled meat. Angus are renowned

as a carcass breed. They are used widely in crossbreeding to improve carcass quality and milking ability. Angus females calve easily and have good calf rearing ability. They are also used as a genetic dehorner as the polled gene is passed on as a dominant characteristic.

### **Distribution**

Angus are a truly international breed, they are the dominant breed in the USA, Canada, Argentina, New Zealand and Australia.

In Australia one in four cattle registered are Angus plus at bull sales, 30% of cattle sold are Angus.

Angus have also spread to South Africa, Brazil, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Spain, Germany and of course they still remain popular in Britain.



## **Charolais**

### **History**

The Charolais originated in west-central to southeastern France, in the old French provinces of Charolles and neighboring Nièvre.



### **Characteristics**

The typical Charolais is white in colour with a pink muzzle and pale hooves, horned, long bodied, and good milkers with a general coarseness to the animal not being uncommon. There are now Charolais cattle being bred black and red in colour.

Charolais are medium to large framed beef cattle with a very deep and broad body. They have a short, broad head and heavily muscled loins.

Charolais have demonstrated growth ability, efficient feedlot gains. With excellent meat conformation, especially of the valuable parts and relative late maturity they are well suited to fattening for high finished weight. They are well suited to all purpose cross breeding.



### **Distribution**

Today Charolais cattle can be found in any cattle producing country.

## **Devon**

### **History**

The Devon, sometimes called North Devon, to distinguish it from the South Devon breed, is one of the oldest beef breeds in existence today.



The native home of the Devon is in southwestern England, primarily in the counties of Devon, Somerset, Cornwall, and Dorset.

### Characteristics

Devon cattle are red in colour, varying in shade from a rich deep red to a light red or chestnut colour. A bright ruby red colour is preferred and accounts for their nickname, the "Red Rubies." The hair is of medium thickness and is often long and curly during the winter; however, coats are short and sleek in summer. The Devon was originally horned, but polling has been introduced over the years, and now 50% of registrations are of polled Devons. They are generally a well muscled breed, but do not possess the extreme muscling of some of the exotics.



Modern Devons are of an adequate size and scale. Mature bulls in good working condition weigh from 1700 to about 2200 pounds with a few in top flesh condition exceeding the later figure. Mature cows range in weight from about 950 to about 1300 pounds.

Calving problems are seldom encountered although a growing stress on using larger bulls has increased the incidence of difficult births. Male calves average about 75 pounds at birth but may range from about 55 to 95 pounds. Heifer calves average about 70 at birth but may range from about 45 to 90 pounds.

The breed has long been noted for its fertility, calving ease, docility, hardiness and ability to adapt to temperature extremes. The well-developed heat-regulating mechanism of the scrotum of Devon bulls give them an unusual ability to remain fertile despite extremely high environmental temperatures.

Devon have the thickest hides of any cattle in the world. That means that Devon cattle have

better resistance to external parasites.

They produce high quality meat in a wide range of production systems, from intensive feedlot or grass finishing to the extensive pastoral run.

### **Statistics**

- Early maturity
- Excellent performance on natural grass based systems
- High daily weight gain
- Docility
- Outstanding mothering and milking ability
- Beef with excellent flavour and tenderness
- Tolerant of hot or bleak climates
- Natural resistance to disease
- An outstanding terminal sire

### **Distribution**

Their ability to efficiently utilize grass and other forages has heightened their popularity in areas like southern Brazil, Australia, and New Zealand.

They are also well known in Europe and the USA.

## **Beef master**

### **History**

Beefmaster cattle are the first American composite breed (combination of three or more breeds). (Beefmaster cattle are 50% Brahman, 25% Hereford, and 25% Milking Shorthorn).



## Characteristics

Beefmasters blend strong maternal traits with excellent growth and carcass abilities. The cattle are heat, drought and insect resistant. They are moderate in size, and while there is no set colour pattern in the breed, they are generally light red to dark red and some will have white mottle on their faces. The females are excellent mothers, raising a heavy calf each year, and the bulls are aggressive breeders. Beefmasters are intelligent, gentle cattle that are truly a pleasure to work with.

The thing that probably most differentiates Beefmaster cattle from other breeds is the Six Essentials, which were the founding selection principles on which the breed was formed:

**Disposition, Fertility, Weight, Conformation, Hardiness and Milk Production.**

## Distribution

Although this breed is relatively new compared to many other breed they are popular across the US and can be found in South Africa and Brazil



## Dexter

### History

The Dexter originated in the South Western region of Ireland where they were originally kept by small landholders and known as the "poor man's cow".

### Characteristics

The Dexter breed is a small breed of cattle. It is a dual-purpose breed, with the average weight of a cow being some 300 - 350 Kg's and standing 92cm - 107cm at the shoulder. There are two recognized types, short legged and non-short, both of which have their equal merits.

The breed comes in three colours, predominately black, but also red and dun. Most are horned although a very few naturally polled animals are becoming available.



Dexters are:

- Small
- Hardy - Dexters are good browsers. They were specialised to live on low-quality vegetation and to forage for their food.
- Efficient
- Versatile
- Intelligent
- Full of personality - Dexters are also kept for pets too.
- Multi-purpose breed
- Great milk and beef
- Easy calving - can also raise two calves at a time



Plus, they are smaller, gentler, and easier on your pastures and fences.

### **Distribution**

Dexters have established themselves well in many parts of the world. They have been exported to Australia, New Zealand, America, Britain, Cuba, Argentina, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Italy, Belgium, Denmark and Germany. Several of these countries have their own breed societies, which only goes to show how well the breed has become established worldwide.

# Santa Gertrudis

## History

The Santa Gertrudis breed of cattle, named for the Spanish land grant where Captain Richard King first established the King Ranch, were developed to thrive, prosper and gain weight on the native grasses of the South Texas brush country. The first and perhaps the most enduring efforts to produce the rugged breed began in 1910 when the King Ranch decided to systematically crossbreed its Shorthorn and Hereford cattle with Brahman. After a few crosses, the **Brahman X Shorthorn cross** showed the most promise, and the ranch headed toward a **cross of 3/8 Brahman and 5/8 Shorthorn as the optimum blend of the two breeds.**



Today Santa Gertrudis are referred to as America's original beef breed. Santa Gertrudis were developed for survival and throughout the years enhanced for profitability.

## Characteristics

The Santa Gertrudis is red in colour and display a blend of *Bos indicus* and *Bos taurus* attributes. They have a short, straight slick coat with loose and moveable skin which is red in pigmentation. Their confirmation is broad, strong and well muscled, they may be polled or horned.

Mature Santa Gertrudis bulls weigh in excess of 900 kg and a mature Santa cow can weigh up to 750kg. Daily weight gains of Santa Gertrudis bulls is regularly monitored at more than 1.5kg per day.

Females with adequate conditions will breed at 12-14 months of age and produce their first calf as a two-year old. The Santa Gertrudis is an above average producer of milk. Due to this heavy milk production she will also wean a heavier calf.

Santa bulls have outstanding foraging ability which means they can thrive even under the harshest conditions and they are noted as very active and athletic sires.

Santa Gertrudis are adaptable to most climates, environments and terrains. Their make-up of 3/8 Brahman, 5/8 Shorthorn has proved to be ideal in most of the varied environments around the world.



Their thick hide serves as insulation to the cold and as a barrier to insects and parasites. The presence of sweat glands in their loose hide also helps them dissipate heat in warm environments. Santa Gertrudis are very disease resistant and will stay healthy in feedlots and confined environments. Santa Gertrudis cattle are hardy animals that will travel long distances in search of forage or water.

### **Distribution**

The Santa Gertrudis are being produced in North and South America, and Australia.