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**The Logic Behind The BRANGUS CROSSBRED Mother Cow and A Brangus X English Rotational Crossbreeding
Program (PART 1)**

It seems almost everyone has their favorite cow, but few have taken the time to really research their choice and sort opinions from facts.

An argument could easily be made that if you cannot find three things wrong with your breed (breeds) of choice, you have not really done your homework. Spitzer Ranch obviously prefers Brangus Cattle – Why? The reason is related to their purpose statement: **“To supply genetics and services to enable cow-calf producers to be successful.”** The genetics they supply are bulls provided to the commercial cattle industry to produce Brangus Crossbred mother cows. Data from many University and USDA research projects from New Mexico to Virginia and from Nebraska to Florida pretty near always place the Brangus Crossbred cow at or near the top of the heap.

Absolutely the most important and profitable reason to use Brangus in your crossbreeding program is increased heterosis. A few years ago this was reinforced when Dr. Larry Cundiff from USDA-MARC, Clay Center, NE reported their data with Bos Indicus cattle indicated a two-fold (twice as much) increase in total heterosis, mostly maternal heterosis, over any combination using strictly English and/or Continental crossbreds. Research proven attributes of the Brangus Crossbred cow include greater fertility, heavier weaning weights, increased heat tolerance, disease resistance, internal and external parasite resistance; tremendous tolerance to the ill effects of Fescue Fungus Toxicosis; increased general hardiness, foraging ability, fleshing ability, lowered maintenance requirements and a tremendous increase in longevity. Arguably Brangus are the only Bos Indicus breed with enough critical mass and number of annual registrations to provide a large enough genetic base for accurate genetic evaluation and selection. Added to that is the fact that Brangus is one of the few breeds able to come close to Angus and Red Angus in carcass quality.

A study from North Carolina State University will suffice as an example. Angus, Brangus and Gelbvieh bulls were mated to Hereford cows to produce F1 (First Generation) crossbred cows and all were bred as yearlings to produce Hereford sired calves as two-year-olds and again bred to Hereford bulls for calving as three-year-olds. They chose to group calves weaned when cows were 2 and 3 year olds together and reported age adjusted calf weaning weights to be 467 pounds for Angus-Hereford (ANxHH) cows, 487 pounds for Gelbvieh-Hereford (GVxHH) cows and 499 pounds for Brangus-Hereford (BNxHH) cows.

Simmental and Salers bulls were used to sire calves born when cows were 4 thru 7 years of age and calf weights were 577 pounds for ANxHH cows, 597 pounds for GVxHH cows and 593 pounds for BNxHH cows. In all instances (cows calving from two thru seven years of age) the Brangus Crossbred cows always produced more calf per weight of cow exposed. Furthermore, in an additional study reported from USDA-MARC, Brangus sired crossbred cows produce 5% more weaning weight per cow exposed than Angus sired crossbred cows. However, that still doesn't depict the potential for "lifetime" productivity from the Brangus Crossbred cow. Data collected at Cow Creek Ranch, AL showed their Brangus cows lasted two to three years longer than their Angus cows. Since most economic data indicate a cow has to wean three calves just to pay her development costs, calculate the math of getting an additional two or three calves over a productive lifetime.

Add to these research data on positive performance and convenience traits the fact that the International Brangus Breeders Association (IBBA) has a registry, performance and records program second to none. Brangus is one of only two breeds in North America absolutely requiring a Total Herd Reporting (THR) data recording process. Every cow in the data base has to have a calf recorded with a mandatory reporting of at least a weaning weight every year. IBBA also maintains a totally open data base and all programs and data on any registered Brangus animal are viewable by any individual at www.gobrangus.com.

Next month will continue the discussion utilizing Brangus X English rotational crossbreeding programs to capture increased heterosis with the associated increases in cow and calf performance and profitability. Several possibilities exist and actual results from Spitzer Ranch bull customers will be explored.

The 2012 SPITZER RANCH PROFESSIONAL CATTLEMEN'S BRANGUS BULL SALE is on tap for Saturday, February 25, 2012.

Please make plans to attend. They also extend to you a personal invitation if you wish your name added to their mailing list for a printed copy of their Newsletter. These Newsletters always provide current Bull Test Performance Reports as well as educational tips, inspiration and insights into a wide variety of timely topics of interest to those cattlemen whose goal is increased profitability. Just call 864/972-9140, write SPITZER RANCH, 1511 HWY 59, Fair Play, SC, 29643 or send email to spitzeranch@mindspring.com. Also, be sure to visit them at www.srbulls.com and follow their posts and QUOTE OF THE WEEK on Facebook.

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