

sFor Immediate Release  
FAIR PLAY, SC  
August 8, 2012

Contact: Doc or Patricia Spitzer  
[spitzeranch@mindspring.com](mailto:spitzeranch@mindspring.com) or  
(864)972-9140 or (864)710-0257

## **Brangus Are Not “Eared” Cattle And Neither Are Any Of The Other Bos Indicus Influenced Breeds**

Around the first of the year a Spitzer Ranch press release titled *Brangus Are Not “Eared” Cattle* was published fairly widely and generated a fair bit of discussion. It was meant to precipitate change in thinking and terminology. If you are a breeder of one of the *Bos Indicus* breeds and the article caused you to feel uncomfortable, it was supposed to do just that. If you are a user or potential user of one of the *Bos Indicus* breeds to create brood cows with an amazing amount of heterosis for all the maternal traits that put dollars in your pocket, read on. If you failed to read the original, email the Spitzers ([spitzeranch@mindspring.com](mailto:spitzeranch@mindspring.com)) and they will gladly send a copy. If you read it, possibly you should read it again; with an open mind.

The entire point of the article was that the term “eared” cattle is absolutely meaningless in today’s cattle industry. If you tell someone you have a load of “eared” calves that may in someone’s mind be a physically descriptive term. However, it is absolutely meaningless as to describing the genetics of the calves involved or how they might perform in the feedlot, in the meat, or as replacement females. Besides, have you ever heard of a load of “earless” calves? Or even a load of calves described as being British calves? Of course not, those calves might be described as being Shorthorn X Hereford calves; or maybe Angus sired calves out of Simmental X Hereford cows and those descriptions do have some genetic meaning.

As stated in the original paper, it may not be totally correct, but all Brahman and the various other American breeds derived from crosses of Brahman (and other Zebu) with any other breeds are referred to as *Bos Indicus*. It has been historically typical of the American beef

industry to wrongly lump all *Bos Indicus* breeds of cattle together. Interesting since there are more recognized different breeds of *Bos Indicus* derivation scattered around the planet than specific breeds of *Bos Taurus* derivation. Even worse is to refer to them collectively as “eared” cattle (and it seems anything with some *Bos Indicus* gets this handle) even when the genetics of that animal’s ancestry are totally unknown. *Bos Indicus* cattle, especially those created in the United States, have dramatically different attributes and their genetic contributions to the beef industry are totally different. Beef producers would make huge errors if they attempted to use these breeds interchangeably. They are not the same cattle. Being Brangus breeders, the Spitzers are proud to call Brangus *Bos Indicus* cattle, but not “eared” cattle. Any attempt to paint all *Bos Indicus* cattle with the same brush and call those “eared” cattle is ridiculous to the extreme. The genetic attributes among the breeds of *Bos Indicus* cattle are dramatically different.

There are actually two issues involved in this discussion. One issue is describing the **GENETICS** of the cattle and where they might fit in the beef industry. For example categorizing a set of Simbrah X Brahman calves and a set of Santa Gertrudis X Red Angus calves as a homogenous group is simply wrong. If these calves were steers, how they should be fed, and to what marketing endpoints would demand entirely different management prior to arriving at the feedlot and throughout the feeding program. Likewise, if these were replacement females, where they best fit environmentally and/or geographically would certainly be different. The second issue is **PRIDE**. Why a Seedstock Breeder involved with any of the *Bos Indicus* breeds or, more importantly, why a Commercial Cattleman who recognizes the superiority of carefully and scientifically established *Bos Indicus* X *Bos Taurus* replacement females be content to have them called “eared” cattle is beyond comprehension. There is no way an Angus breeder would be

content to have a set of calves described as British cattle. No way! That Angus breeder would demand that the calves be described as Angus or Angus crossbreds. It's logical; it describes the cattle genetically; and it proves up on pride of ownership.

What follows is the SPITZER RANCH version of the attributes of Brangus cattle and why they are important to commercial beef production systems:

- Brangus cattle are all 3/8 Brahman and 5/8 Angus or Red Angus from their original genetic makeup.
- Brangus can be either Black or Red depending on your preference for hide color.
- Since there is no “grading up” program from other registered breeds or commercial cattle, there are no genes other than Brahman and Angus/Red Angus in Brangus.
- Brangus has the largest performance record data base of all *Bos Indicus* Breeds.
  - Brangus register close to 25,000 animals annually and the next closest *Bos Indicus* breed registers approximately 1/3 that number.
  - Brangus is one of only two registered cattle breeds in the US to have mandatory Total Herd Reporting (THR) where every cow on inventory has to have a reported weaning event. The THR system collects more birth and growth data, eliminates reporting bias and provides more accurate EPDs.
- Brangus is one of only a few breeds in the US using a true Multi-breed Genetic Evaluation model with multiple data bases included in that analysis to compute EPDs.
- Brangus has more ultrasound and actual carcass data than other *Bos Indicus* breeds, proving their ability to marble and grade Choice with a more favorable yield grade.
- Two tenderness projects prove Brangus Warner Bratzler values equivalent to Angus.
- Brangus (Straight Brangus and Crossbreds) have from the beginning been accepted into the Certified Angus Beef (CAB) program.
- A summary of research reports indicate Brangus are the best compromise of Angus carcass traits with added growth.
- Crossbreeding with *Bos Indicus* X *Bos Taurus* generates twice the amount of heterosis, or hybrid vigor, as *Bos Taurus* X *Bos Taurus* and the majority of this extra heterosis is more importantly maternal heterosis.
- The productive longevity of Brangus cows is certainly the envy of the beef industry.

No, Brangus are not “eared” cattle. They are an American created *Bos Indicus* breed with very specifically defined origins. Brangus, like other *Bos Indicus* cattle, really out perform all *Bos Taurus* cattle in harsh environments, but Brangus are not the same cattle genetically as Brahman, Beef Master, Santa Gertrudis, Braford or Simbrah. The positive and profitable genetic contributions they make to a cow herd are dramatically different from any of the other *Bos*

*Indicus* breeds. Finally, the Spitzers have tremendous respect for the contributions of the other *Bos Indicus* breeds to the American cattle industry. However, they passionately believe we are all better served to relegate the term “eared” cattle to the trash bin. It never served the beef industry in a logical manner. Step up to the plate, have pride in your breed and demand *Bos Indicus* PUREBREDS and CROSSBREDS be described as what they truly are. They are genetically different so don’t allow them to be lumped as a group.

The **2012 SPITZER RANCH PROFESSIONAL CATTLEMEN’S BRANGUS BULL SALE** and **CUSTOMER COMMERCIAL BRANGUS FEMALE SALE** will be at the ranch in Fair Play, SC **Saturday, February 23, 2013**. A downloadable Bull Sale Catalog will be available at [www.srbulls.com](http://www.srbulls.com) for you to print for yourself approximately February 1, 2012. If you do not have access to a computer they will be pleased to mail a printed copy on request. If you would like to receive their Newsletters with complete performance reports on bulls being developed for sale (including current EPDs, birth and weaning data as well as current rates of gain on the growth and development program) get in touch and they would be pleased to add your name to their mailing list. Their increasingly popular Newsletters always provide educational tips, inspiration and insights into a wide variety of timely topics of interest to those cattlemen whose goal is increased profitability. Call 864/972-9140, write SPITZER RANCH, 1511 HWY 59, Fair Play, SC, 29643 or send an email to [spitzeranch@mindspring.com](mailto:spitzeranch@mindspring.com). And you are invited to visit them at [www.srbulls.com](http://www.srbulls.com) and follow their posts on Facebook. They hope to see you at this year’s sale!

\*\*\*END\*\*\*