

## LANE BERRY: 1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE JUNIOR DIV

9 yr. old

The Brahman Foundation Essay Contest

Why did I choose to show a Brahman?

Why did I choose to show a Brahman? Honestly, the Brahman breed chose me. I really didn't have a choice in the beginning. My momma made the decision for my older brothers because that was the only breed that was available for her when she showed. When I ask her why my Pops and Uncle Bulldog only raised Brahmans, she always rattles off the important "adult" reasons, such as "they are a breed resistant to heat, disease and insect extremes." That is usually followed by, "they are a breed capable of grazing over large areas of the coastal plains and producing superior quality beef." Then her last statement is, "Brahmans are second to none in terms of thriftiness, hardiness and rustling ability." These are always her exact words every time. She always has a funny smile on her face when she repeats them and I always know why. That's the words from the first paragraph of her AJBA speech from the 1992 All American. It was the last speech she wrote and the last All American she would ever share with my grandfather. He was injured a few months later by one of her show heifers that resulted in his death.

I am only 9 years old so the reasons that my mom gives for choosing a Brahmans for us means nothing to me now. My brothers and I all have different dreams and goals in life. One wants to work with horses, one wants to go to college and one wants to be on The Voice and drive racecars. I believe that Marshall and I will be part of the Brahman breed forever. I know that it is important for me to know breed characteristics that make Brahmans the most functional breed in the beef cattle industry, but for now, I have my own reasons.

One of the things I love so much about Brahmans, and it makes this breed stand out from the rest, is their smell. Just like I know the smell of my momma's baking, I can smell a Brahman from a mile away. Sometimes I catch myself burying my face in my heifer's neck and dewlap just to breathe in that Brahman smell. After rubbing on her for so long, my fingers and palms are always covered in black smudge from her oily skin and sweat. Maybe I should just rub myself all over her and I would be more resistant to the giant mosquitoes we have here in South Texas. Not only do I love their smell but their skin is like no other breed of cattle as well. It's flabby, loose, and thick and it jiggles when my heifer walks. Don't tell my momma, but my daddy says that gets worse with age, for my heifer of course. I love to get our Brahmans running in the pasture because their skin flops around and makes them look like they are making funny faces. Their skin is one of the reasons that make Brahmans famous for their hardiness. It is also why my heifer is still walking around and grazing in the 110 degree heat in Texas and my fair steer is lying under the old shade tree. She is much more efficient with her heavy, loose hide and it makes her tolerant to the heat. Although I still giggle when I think of what she would look like if she could stick her head out of the trailer while going down the highway.

The next reason I chose a Brahman would be their hump. That would have to be the most asked question from anyone who passes down our aisle at a stock show. "What is the hump for?" "Is your cow a camel?" Those questions make for really good show box humor between my brothers and me. I use their hump as a pillow during nap time at shows but it really does serve a purpose. It is exactly like a camel's hump. It is a large deposit of fat that they use to store food and water. It is just one more reason why the Brahman breed can stand the heat in the southeastern Gulf States.

Another reason I choose Brahman over any other breed is their bellow. It's definitely like no other breed. It is a low, deep sound which is very hard to describe in words. I like to say that my cows don't "moo," they "murr." Every one of them has a different "murr." I can always tell which one is the hungriest in the morning. I can hear them bellowing through my bedroom window. My momma has one favorite cow named Morgan. It doesn't matter how far out in the pasture she is, if she hears my momma or dad call her name, she always answers and comes running.

This brings me to the last reason why I love having Brahman, for their love and intelligence. They are so smart and curious. They can open gates that are locked, they know certain voices, and they know which sack in the back of my dad's truck is their feed. They love us so much that they try to get into the front seat of the truck. If Morgan happens to get out, there is nothing to worry about because she always comes across the driveway and into the garage. They love to be scratched under their neck, behind their ears and between their back legs.

I don't believe I could ever choose another breed of cattle. I love my Brahman. I have given enough reasons to make anyone love this breed. Sure they are the most efficient breed to withstand the conditions of the Gulf Coast, but to a little boy like me, they make the best friends!