

MADISON PLEASANT – 2ND PLACE INTERMEDIATE DIVISION

Why I Chose Brahman

When asked what a Brahman is, I typically tell people a heat tolerant, disease resistant, loving and majestic breed of cattle. When looking in the old Merriam-Webster dictionary a Brahman is ...”a large vigorous heat- and tick-resistant usually silvery-gray animal developed in the southern United States from the zebu and now used chiefly for crossbreeding”.

At an early age, I developed a love for the show ring. After church services on Sunday evening, my friends would gather at one of the grandparent’s home to work with their show projects. I immediately wanted a calf of my own after going with them a few times. Looking back it’s kind of funny where it all started. My dad called our local sale barn and described the type of commercial calf he was looking for. Yes, my first show calf came from the local sale barn! After many hours of “love” was spent breaking this calf, we finally made it to the show. We both had a lot of learning and I’m glad she was receptive to the process.

State Fair rolled around and we were stilled across the aisle from a gray Brahman show string. I was in awe that such massive creatures could be led around by kids my size. I would glance over and see them laying on top of their cows and thought to myself “I would be trampled if I tried that”. I begged my parents for one of those kinds but still had a lot of persuading to do to show that I was serious about my new interest in showing cattle.

I finally convinced my dad to purchase a gray bull for sale at a show. I named him Harvey and it was “love” at first sight. We instantly connected; he grew with me and helped build my confidence in the ring. As he grew, he developed structural issues with his feet that ended his show career prematurely. A friend knew I enjoyed showing cattle and said she had some halter broken cattle for sale. I needed a replacement calf immediately and I ended up going the opposite direction for several years showing Shorthorns, Chianinas and Maine Anjous. I learned what work, work, work was with these cattle. Up early to wash before school, rinse in the evenings and lots of blowing hair for growth and hair

direction. There was one big problem though...at the end of these projects when I turned them out in the pasture; they struggled immensely in our hot, humid climate. Seeing this time and time again, our family decided we needed to go in a different direction. Immediately I knew that direction was with Brahman cattle.

Most cattle produced in our state come from cow-calf farms and ranches. With cow-calf operations, as with other farm enterprises, making a profit is the *only* thing that will keep you in business. How much profit you make depends largely on your ability to market your calves. Profitable cattle marketing involves more than just getting the highest price. It involves producing the type of calf the market desires, marketing that calf through the best outlet and at the best time. Unfortunately, most cow-calf producers simply *sell* their calves. They produce calves that are the easiest to raise, sell at the most convenient market outlet and at the most convenient time.

The old saying goes that if you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there. But if marketing your cattle at a profit is where you want to go, then planning for the market will help get you there. There are many factors that determine the value of a feeder calf including breed, frame, muscling, condition, weight, sex, horns, personal preference and the list goes on and on.

Did you know that the Brahman breed was the first cattle breed developed in the United States? The first humped cattle came into the United States from India in the mid-1800s. They were created from the existing breeds known as the Guzerat, Gir, the Nellore and the Krishna Valley to encompass a range of desirable traits. Brahman cattle are known to be heat tolerant, disease resistant due to their thick skin and oily secretions and their ability to shake their loose hide unlike other breeds of cattle, longevity of life, milk quality, calving ease, intelligence, desired disposition, and are even used as dual purpose breeds around the world. Those traits are often used in cross breeding programs. Most breeds have been crossed successfully with Brahman cattle. Beefmaster, Braford , Brangus, Santa Gertrudis and Simbrah are a few of these examples. The Brahman influence continuously makes it mark across our auction barns every week in addition to ongoing video cattle and private treaty sales.

Crossbred calves have traditionally been in higher demand because of the advantage of hybrid vigor --crossing two different breeds allowing the offspring to present with a combination of the desirable traits from each parent. In the cattle world, maximum hybrid vigor is obtained by crossing two generally unrelated animals, achieving the "best of both worlds". Because of this added hybrid vigor,

the use of Brahman bulls with European or English breed cows is one of the most popular crossbreeding practices in the United States, with the resulting Brahman F-1 calf in high demand due to their enhanced abilities to tolerate and thrive in the climate and conditions of the harsh southern area we know and love.

As the day comes to an end, I can rest assured that the Brahman breed will continue to bring my family and the livestock industry a prosperous future. I can tell you --that a cow-calf producer influences the marketability of their cattle the day they select their breeding stock. While it is true that almost any type of cattle can be sold at a price, the cattle producer should be raising the most profitable calf. I believe in the Brahman breed and this is why I chose Brahman!