

Crossbreeding - with the Shorthorn Advantage



Crossbreeding is the single most valuable tool for the commercial beef producer to produce the type of cattle within an environment, best suited to market requirements.

A well planned crossbreeding program matches breed characteristics to environments and markets and the end result of your crossbreeding program will be largely dependant on the choice of breeds which are used.

Shorthorns have a range of important maternal and carcass traits that will ensure the success of your crossbreeding program - just as they have contributed to the successful development of the Santa Gertrudis, Murray Grey, Belmont Red and Droughtmaster breeds and a number of other composite breeds in northern Australia.

Shorthorns are noted for their docility, calving ease, finishing ability, growth and marbling ability – traits that are valued by the commercial cattleman and are key elements in any crossbreeding program.

Whilst British Breeds share many characteristics in common, results from the Cooperative Research Centre (Beef Quality) at Armidale, NSW, clearly show that **Shorthorns have superior marbling** performance to Herefords, **and have superior Net Feed Intake** (feed efficiency) performance to Angus.

These results make the Shorthorn breed uniquely positioned to be the British Breed of choice in your crossbreeding program – they have it all.

The following examples show how Shorthorn sires fit a range of crossbreeding systems and breeding objectives:

Two-Way Cross

Shorthorn sires bred to Hereford cows will produce progeny some 5% heavier than straight-bred calves, **and** with improved marbling performance – a good fit for the Domestic grass fattened and short-fed feedlot trade.

Shorthorn sires bred to Angus cows will produce progeny some 5% heavier **and** hold marbling steady – a good fit for both the domestic Supermarket and Restaurant trades, as well as the long-fed and B3 Japanese and Korean export markets. The Shorthorn is unique in that it is the only breed that can be crossed with Angus that will give better growth but maintain marbling.

The female progeny of either Shorthorn/Hereford or Shorthorn/Angus cross will also be valuable as first cross dams exhibiting maternal hybrid vigour plus the valued maternal traits of the Shorthorn breed.

F1 cow / Terminal sire Cross

Shorthorn sires bred to European or Bos indicus cross cows will produce progeny that express maximum hybrid vigour for growth **and** have improved marbling and finishing ability well suited to the EU and Domestic Restaurant trade.

The progeny of Shorthorn/Charolais cross sires over Angus/Hereford cross cows **maximize** the benefits of well planned crossbreeding – efficiency, growth, yield, eating quality, finishing ability and eating quality that fit a range of market opportunities. In tougher environment, these sires used over Brahman cross cows will give similar outstanding progeny performance.

Rotational Cross

Shorthorns fit comfortably alongside Angus or Herefords in a 2-breed rotational cross where it is important to match similar mature cow size and maturity patterns in the parent breeds. Progeny will have **improved** growth, fertility **and** carcass performance compared to straight-bred animals.

In existing Hereford/Angus two-breed rotational cross herds, Shorthorns can be introduced as a third breed to give additional hybrid vigour and marbling performance into what now becomes a three-breed rotational cross system.

Selecting Shorthorn bulls for Crossbreeding Programs

As for straight-breeding, it is important to select sires for crossbreeding programs on the basis of genetic merit for trait performance within their respective breed.

The Shorthorn breed, having one of the highest participation rates in Breedplan with **Estimated Breeding Values** (EBVs for a wide range of Birth, Growth, Maternal and Carcass traits, and **Selection Indexes** for four major domestic and export markets, can provide you with the information you need to select sires best suited to your needs.

This information is available by referring to individual Shorthorn breeder's sale catalogues, and at multi-vendor sales conducted throughout Australia each year. The catalogued bulls will be listed on the Shorthorn web-site www.shorthorn.com.au

Using the Shorthorn web based enquiry system, you can search for bulls within your locality that meet your min/max EBV range for individual traits or index values.

For more information on crossbreeding, refer to the Shorthorn Technical note **Crossbreeding – the Last Free Lunch** at www.shorthorn.com.au