

Brahman

Agra se Paul Klein gee terugvoer oor stoetveilings

Die Brahman-ras se sterk teenwoordigheid in die Namibiese vleis-bedryf het opnuut op die voorgrond getree tydens terugvoer oor Agra-stoetbeesveilings op die Brahman-beoordelaarskonferensie en die jaarlikse telersdag wat onderskeidelik begin en einde Maart plaasgevind het. "Op 15 van 24 stoetbeesveilings van verlede jaar is Brahmane aangebied. Die totale aanbod van bulle van dertig telers was 318 bulle waarvan 277 verkoop is. Die grootste aanbod was 46 bulle op 'n veiling in Junie verlede jaar," het Paul Klein, Agra se lewende-hawe-bestuurder, gesê.

Van die totale aanbod is 87% diere verkoop. Bulle se gemiddelde prys was N\$51 700 en dié van die 274 geregistreerde vroulike diere waarvan 'n groot gros jong diere was, was N\$25 960. Word gekyk na die afgelope vyf jaar (2017 tot 2021) se gemiddeld is 218 Brahman-bulle per jaar verkoop, het Paul bygevoeg.

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Agra se Paul Klein gee terugvoer oor stoetveilings

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Voorts het hy Oktober se nasionale veiling as 'n hoogtepunt uitgelig waar die hoogste prys nog vir 'n Rooi Brahmanbul betaal is. Op N\$280 000 was dit 'n nuwe Brahman-rekordprys vir Wykman Corné NB18-0026 uit Wykman Brahmane se stal. Die koper was Hardus Breedts wat afgesien van Simbra-teling onlangs ook met 'n Brahman-stoetery onder die Rumba-vaandel geregistreer het.

Die naashoogste prys was N\$200 000 vir 'n Wit Brahmanbul van Fred en Uta Redecker (Porta Brahmane) wat teler Rynand Mudge gekoop het.

Op een na is al 28 bulle op aanbod van die hand gesit. Noemenswaardig is dat elf van die bulle vir meer as N\$100 000 verkoop het wat die gemiddelde prys op N\$103 000 te staan gebring het. Die gemiddelde prys vir die rooi bulle was N\$131 750 en vir die wit bulle N\$98 208.

Paul het voorts aandag aan aanlyn-statistieke gegee. "Selfs die voorafgaande Brahman-simposium is uitgesaai wat 700 kykers gelok het. Op die daaropvolgende nasionale veiling die namiddag het 153 kykers ingeskakel. In totaal het 49 digitale kopers geregistreer onder wie 13 aktief deelgeneem het deur op 25 lotte te bide. Vyf van die kopers was suksesvol met tien lotte wat aan hulle toegestaan is."

Terselfdertyd het Paul gewys op Namibiese Brahman-telers wat al jare betrokke is by genomika – 'n geleentheid wat meer gebruik kan word om aan die hand van genomiese genetiese resultate eien-skappe soos vleissagtheid te bevorder. Hy glo Namibiese vleis moet as eg-organiese vleis bemark word.

Ten opsigte van beraamde teelwaardes het hy gewys op die sterk invloed daarvan op bulpryse. "Al hoe meer kopers fokus op teel-



Paul Klein, Agra se lewende-hawebestuurder, wat interessante terugvoer oor stoetveilings op die Brahman-telersdag gegee het.

waardes. Telers wat nie dié inligting van hul diere in die veilingkatalogus aandui nie, sal al hoe meer marktaandeel verloor. Selfs kommersiële boere sal in die toekoms al meer konsentreer op bulle wat oor teelwaardes beskik." Volgens Paul het bewustheid oor teelwaardes gewis toegeneem in die huidige tyd van kudde bou ná 'n klomp droogtejare.

Aan die hand van 'n ontleding van beraamde teelwaardes (EBV's) van die duurste sestig bulle op veilings van Februarie tot September 2021 met 'n verkoopprijs hoër as N\$60 000 het Paul die volgende tabel voorgehou om kopersvoorkeure uit te lig. Sy bevinding was dat 38% van die bulle se EBV vir geboortegewig onder rasgemiddeld was. Vir groei (220, 440 600 dae) was tussen 53 en 55% van die bulle op rasgemiddeld. Vir melk was 56% bo rasgemiddeld terwyl 52% van die bulle 'n voerkraal-indeks bo rasgemiddeld gehad het.

Ten slotte was Paul se boodskap aan telers dat kwaliteitdiere altyd goeie pryse behaal. "Daarmee saam is dissipline en bemarking bepalend in die sukses wat telers behaal."

TEELWAARDES	20% < Brah Gem	= Br Gem	20% > Br Gem
Geboortegewig	38,3%	28,3%	33,3%
200 dae	25%	55%	20%
400 dae	20%	53,3%	26,7%
600 dae	16,7%	55%	28,3%
Volwasse koeigewig	31,3%	35,3%	33,3%
Melk	21%	22,8%	56,2%
Voerkraal-indeks	22,7%	25%	52,3%

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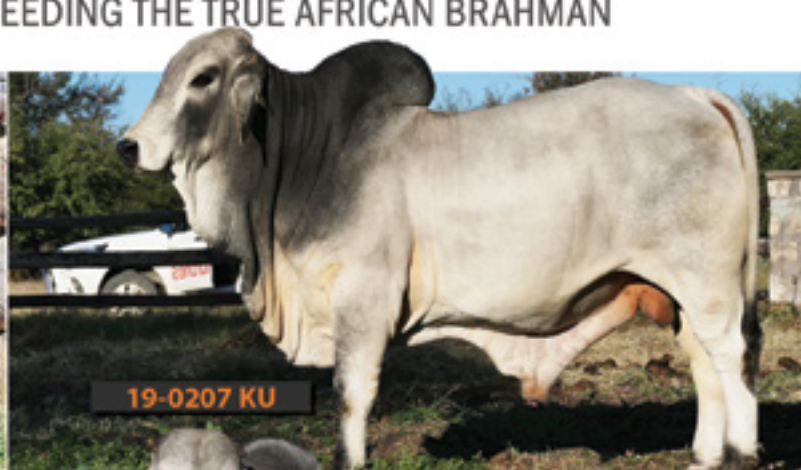


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Die Brahman-bul Shano wat tans die grootste invloed op die Karla Brahman-stoetkudde van Silvia van Biljon het. Dié bul van ACB Brahmane (André Compion) is 'n nasaat van teler Kaspar Günzel se gedugte en alombekende Mr Tralon.



Vroulike stoetdiere van Buschbrunn Simmentalers en Karla Brahmane poseer trots vir 'n foto op die plaas Buschbrunn by Kombat waar Silvia van Biljon ook akkerbou beoefen.

Gasvrou Silvia aan die woord oor Karla Brahmane



Cobus van der Merwe, president van die Brahman Telersgenootskap, oorhandig 'n blyk van waardering aan Silvia van Biljon wat gasvrou van vanjaar se telersdag was.

Brahman-teling op Buschbrunn by Kombat het in 2010 begin om stukrag aan die kruisteelprogram met Simmentalers te gee. "Ons het aanvanklik Brahman-bulle ingekoop vir die kommersiële been van ons boerdery totdat my jongste suster, Karola, besluit het om self Brahmane vir dié doel te begin teel," het Silvia van Biljon in haar spreekbeurt gesê. Hul afgetrede ouers, Armin en Ulla, is wyd bekend as gesoute Simmentaler-telers.

Toe Karla, na wie die stoetery heet, uit die boerdery klim, het ousus Silvia die dapper stap geneem om ná sowat 'n jaar oor te neem. 'n Trotse oomblik vir haar was toe die Simbra-koei VB10-10 haar verskyning maak. 'n Mede-teler was gou om te sê hy soek die 22-jarige koei, wat nog reproduseer dat dit klap, in sy stoet.

Koeie soos hierdie een gaan nie ná 'n goeie produksieleeftyd op die ou end slagplaas of veiling toe. Hul vleis word ook nie geëet nie. "Hulle is soos familie, word in die komposhoop begrawe en beland jare later in die landerye saam met die kompos. Dit gaan nie net oor geld nie; dit gaan ook oor liefde," sê Silvia. Van die uithaler Buschbrunn Simmentalerkoeie deel die komposgraf met Brahmane aan wie groot sentiment geheg word.

Toe sy einde 2012 plaas toe is, het Silvia die moeilike kant van boerdery leer ken. Eers het die plaas afgebrand, toe lui 2013 'n klomp opvolgende droogtejare in. "Aanvanklik het ek getalle in die kommersiële boerdery gesny deur diere ouer as agt jaar en dié wat sukkel om kondisie te hou uit te haal. Later was ek verplig om dit ook in die twee stoetkuddes (Sim-

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Telers trek saam op Bushbrunnen

Net twee dae voordat die jaarlikse Brahman-telersdag op 3 Februarie vanjaar sou plaasvind, het 'n donderstorm sake erg deurmekaar gekrap. 'n Sterk bui van 160 mm het toe op die plaas Bushbrunnen van gasvrou Silvia van Biljon digby Kombat uitgesak en die groot gronddamwal laat meeggee. Toe volg 'n haelstorm van 50 mm 'n maand later, vroeg in Maart, wat reuse-haelskade in die mielielanderye veroorsaak. Dit het Silvia met geen ander keuse gelaat as om op die nippertjie die geleentheid uit te stel nie. Die vernielde mielielanderye op 44 ha onder besproeiing en 50 ha droëland moes dringend ekstra kunsmis kry om te probeer red wat te redde was, maar op die ou end is die oesverwagting nie goed nie. Dié terugslae is wel met groot sukses beloon toe 'n stewige getal telers van 34 op 31 Maart opgedaag het vir deelname aan 'n opwindende program. Brahman-sake was natuurlik hoog op die agenda waartydens president Cobus van der Mer-

mentaler en Brahman) te doen. Die ergste droogte nog op Buschbrunnen was in 2019 toe ons minder as 200 mm gemeet het teenoor ons omgewing se gemiddelde reënval van ver meer as dubbel soveel."

Tog meen Silvia dis juis die moeilike tye wat 'n teler die geleentheid bied om aangepaste, geharde genetica terug te hou. "Ek het in die rampdroogte van 2019-2020 boskos begin gee. As eksien 'n dier verloor kondisie en gaan dit nie maak nie, is hy of sy uitgehaal." Tans staan die vroulike Brahman-stoetdiere op 80.

Silvia glo niks oortref die F1-kruisings tussen die Brahman en Simmentaler nie. Rekordhouding van die kommersiële boerdery word net so streng soos by die stoetdiere gedien.

Voorts het Silvia gewys op die nuwe uitdaging van luiperds. "Toe ek 'n kind was, het ons net jagluiperds hier gehad. Hulle is nou weg en die luiperds het ingetrek. Verliese van tot dertig kalwers per maand het my gedwing om ver dragtige koeie huis toe te bring vir kalwing. Snags wanneer die ma's wei, word hul kalwers afgehou. Omdat die kalwers nie wei nie, tel hulle nie so vinnig gewig op nie. Op drie maande word hulle bedags uitgelaat om onder toesig in die gange te wei. Die opasstelsel is intensief en kos ekstra. Vir bykomende luiperdbeheer het ek twee tot vier donkies wat by elke pos saam met koeie en hul kalwers loop. Dit werk goed."

Nog 'n kopseer is bosslagters wat gereeld toeslaan. Silvia het pas sekuriteit met 'n kame-rastelsel opgeskerp en hoop om nou resultate met inhegtenisnemings te kry.

Ter afsluiting het sy opgemerk dat dit nie aldag maklik is vir 'n vrou om haar in die hoofsaaklik mannewêreld van boerdery te handhaaf nie, veral ten opsigte van arbeidsbe-stuur. "Dit is asof werkers meer kans met ons vroue vat. Hulle onderskat ook soms ons kennis. Ek het geleer om strenger met hulle te wees en dit werk."

we medetelers aangemoedig het om vanjaar se nasionale Brahman-kampioenskap by die Windhoek-skou te ondersteun. Tydens die inligtingssessie het Paul Klein van Agra terugvoer oor verlede jaar se Brahman-stoetveiling gegee, Jacque Els was aan die woord oor vordering in die vleisbees-genomika-projek en veearts Julie Heusquin het meer lig gewerp op kunsmatige inseminasie en embio-oorplantings en hoe die Brahman-ras



Brahman-teler Henry Mans besig om stoetdiere van medeteler Silvia van Biljon (regs) ultrasonies te skandeer. Hy is een van enkele geakkrediteerde tegnisi in die land wat skanderings by telers doen vir karkasmetings op lewende diere. Vetneerlegging, oospieroppervlakte, marmering en uitslagpersenta-sie kan op dié manier baie akkuraat bepaal word.



Hardus Breedt en sy seun, Hans, wat afgesien van Simbra-teling nou ook toegetree het tot Brahman-teling.



Brahman-telers het ook die geleentheid gehad om die mielielanderye te besoek waar haelskade van 'n enkele erge donderbui van meer as 160 mm sigbaar was.

Brahman-telers luister aandagtig na voordragte tydens die inligtingssessie van die jaarlikse telersdag.



hierby kan baat vind. Laastens was Silvia aan die woord oor Brahman-teling en haar boerdery. Toe kom die reën weer, hierdie keer 'n ligte bui, wat die kraalbesoek vir die bespreking van diere uit Silvia se stoet, Karla Brahmane, en die besigtiging van landerye effe onderbreek het. Tussendeur het Silvia, Claudia Dohmen en Mark Mücke reggestaan om gaste op heerlike eet- en drinkgoed te trakteer.



Telers tydens die kraalbesoek waar diere van Karla Brahmane bespreek is. Silvia van Biljon, gasvrou van die telersdag, het gewys op die vier bloedlyne in haar Brahman-stoetkudde: verse en 'n bul van Hagen Eggert en nog bulle van Rynand Mudge, Mecki Schneider en voormalige teler André Compion.



F1-kruiskalwers ... die beste wat jy kan kry, glo teler Silvia van Biljon oor die jare lange beproefde kruisteelprogram tussen Brahmane en Simmentalers op Buschbrunnen. Brahman-teling is meer as 'n dekade gelede ingelyf om self bulle vir kommersiële teling te verskaf. Simmentaler-teling kom 'n veel langer pad en word al vir 58 jaar op Buschbrunnen gedoen.

The Namibian Brahman's journey to single-step analysis

Jacque Els, manager of the

Namibian Stud Breeders Association

The world we live in is one of constant evolution, to such an extent that new technology today will be outdated in a short time. The computer and cell phone industries are excellent examples of how quickly technology evolves. People who depend for their livelihoods on the use of these equipment, are compelled to change with technology, or they will go out of business, as new computers will not support their old programmes.

In the livestock industry we find ourselves in a similar situation, perhaps not at the same rate, but technology is evolving and breeders need to keep abreast with it, or run the risk that they will forfeit the advantage that they may have in the industry.

We have seen this evolution in the use of genetic markers – from the original use of blood microsatellites using seven markers, to DNA using hair and tissue samples using 15 markers, to genotyping using SNPs. In genotyping the evolution has been quite rapid from the original 3K chip through the 7K, 20K, 30K, 50K, 80K, 150K and 777K to the current breed specific chips. For the Brahman it is the dedicated 35K and the 50K. All of this happened within seven years.

Genotyping is replacing DNA profiling of animals, as we know it. It is a more powerful tool combining parentage markers (± 250) with markers for the different traits. Traditional DNA par-



Jacque Els

entage verification only uses a small number of markers. As this technology progressed, the cost per test decreased. During 2016, when the Beef Genomics Programme (BGP) commenced in Southern Africa the cost for a 3K-chip was N\$760 and for a 150K chip N\$2 500. Today the cost for a 100K Bos Taurus Neogen chip and a 50K Brahman dedicated chip is N\$620. The samples for these tests must be sent to Neogen, Scotland for analysis. Unistel has a 50K Geneseek chip available for genotyping cattle.

The Namibian Brahman Breeders and the SA Brahman Breeders Society entered a joint plan for the first phase of the BGP from 2016-2018, funded by the South African government. The BGP was introduced to enable the beef industry to attain the goal of single-step analysis (GEBVs) quicker. The funding subsidised the cost of genotyping and the more difficult/more expensive traits to record such as nett-feed intake (NFI) and meat quality tests.

The main goal of the BGP was to enable the breed societies to achieve the ultimate goal of receiving GEBVs. However, certain objectives had to be reached first, namely:

- Improved EBVs for all traits, including difficult to measure/expensive to measure traits through the collection of more accurate data.
- Establish a reference population with an accurate database.

- Improve participation of previously disadvantaged farmers/breeders.
- Total herd recording.
- Improve genetic linkages.
- Improve/update selection indices.

During the BGP's first phase Namibian participants submitted 514 samples for genotyping. Of these 430 genotypes were received back and loaded onto the system. Negotiations are ongoing with the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) in South Africa regarding the 73 outstanding genotypes. During December 2020 one of the Brahman breeders sent 20 samples of influential females as a trail run to Neogen Scotland, to have them genotyped by using the 50K chip. During October 2021, after the Aldam Stockman School, the late Dr Michael Bradfield brokered a deal with Neogen to genotype between 2 500 and 3 500 animals (breeding bulls and influential dams) at a reduced price on condition that the hair samples had to be in Scotland by the end of the first week of March 2021.

At the 2021 AGM of the Namibian Brahman Breeders Society it was decided that the sires of all Brahman calves born after 1 June 2021 have to be genotyped. The special offer from Neogen created an excellent opportunity for breeders to genotype their herd sires. A total of 540 hair samples of 384 bulls and 156 influential cows were sent from Namibia. The results are expected shortly.

During the BGP's first phase a total of 117 meat samples of slaughtered Brahman bulls were sent



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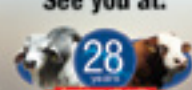
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Breed	No of breeders	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Brahman	8	298	154	209	279	210	166	1 316
Simmentaler	5		41	78	47	77	98	341
Simbra	4	24	34	26	51	41	38	214
Hereford	1					5	6	11
Braunvieh	1					10	12	22
Boran	1					11		11
Beefmaster	1						12	12
Total	21	322	229	313	377	354	332	1 975

Table 1: Summary of NFI tests from 2016 until 14-4-2021

to the ARC in South Africa for meat quality testing. Unfortunately ten of these samples were lost. Initially results of 52 samples were received and loaded onto the system. During February 2021 results of the 46 outstanding tests were forwarded to the Namibia Stud Breeders Association and loaded onto the system. In this regard Brahman breeders will have to provide more data to allow meat quality EBVs to be calculated for the breed.

During 2016 the privately owned GenTecSol commenced the testing of bulls for NFI. This facility is open to all breeds, but to date the Brahman has tested the largest number of bulls (Ta-

ble 1) – 1 316 from 2016 until 14 April 2021. These test results, together with the results from the South African testing stations and usable historic data, enabled ABRI-Breedplan to provide EBVs for both NFI-P (NFI post-wean) and NFI-F (NFI finishing). In Namibia breeders continued sending bulls to the station after the completion of the first BGP phase carrying the full costs of the tests themselves. Participation by more breeders, each sending a minimum of five bulls and the progeny of two herd sires, will strengthen data.

The BGP enabled the Brahman breed to obtain EBVs for docility, days-to-calving (DtC) as well as NFI-P and NFI-F.

Ultrasonic scanning of live animals for carcass traits has been ongoing since 2006. Brahman Breeders were among the first to start measuring carcass traits.

To reach the point where a breed can receive

GEBVs, it is of utmost important that a reference population, consisting of animals with a complete set of performance records (all herd sires and influential dams) must be built.

In the estimation of GEBVs all the information regarding the animal's pedigree, performance and genotype is combined in a single analysis. The more performance data an animal has, the greater the contribution of genotype information. Thus it remains of utmost importance that breeders continue collecting performance data of their animals as this drives estimations.

Early in 2022, the Technological Innovative Agency (TIA) approached the Livestock Registration Federation (LRF) and SA Studbook to inquire about the possibility of a BGP Phase 2 which they are prepared to fund. Management plans were submitted during 2019, but because of Covid-19 no progress was made. Should the next phase commence, funds will be available to subsidise the costs of genotyping and testing for NFI and meat quality.

The Brahman Breed Societies of Namibia and

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Brahman	702	644	808	983	1 078	1 051	1 414	1 361	1 321	1 562	1 736	1 325	987	1 057	834	1 960	18 823
Simm	435	451	354	248	357	433	427	284	201	368	423	320	313	374	256	408	5 652
Simbra	384	437	502	340	410	405	470	424	311	421	415	345	344	403	142	583	6 336
Bonsmara		56	96	34	193	397	235	274	200	279	221	190	177	200	148	240	2 940
Hereford				23	56	57	-	-	30	38	52	60	37	50	5	50	458
Braunvieh				25	67	71	75	113	-	275	353	240	238	160	136	195	1 948
Limousin				109	-	-	128	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	237
Boran					13	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	34	30	43	72	212
Afrikaner					39	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	39
Santa							289	256	120	106	140	155	37	165	-	40	1 308
Charolais											21	23	-	21	-	-	65
Beefm																24	24
Droughtm																24	24
Total	1 521	1 588	1 760	1 762	2 213	2 414	3 038	2 712	2 183	3 049	3 361	2 678	2 167	2 460	1 564	3 596	38 066

Table 2 provides an indication of the number of animals scanned per breed from 2007 to June 2021, of which 49,44% were Brahman.

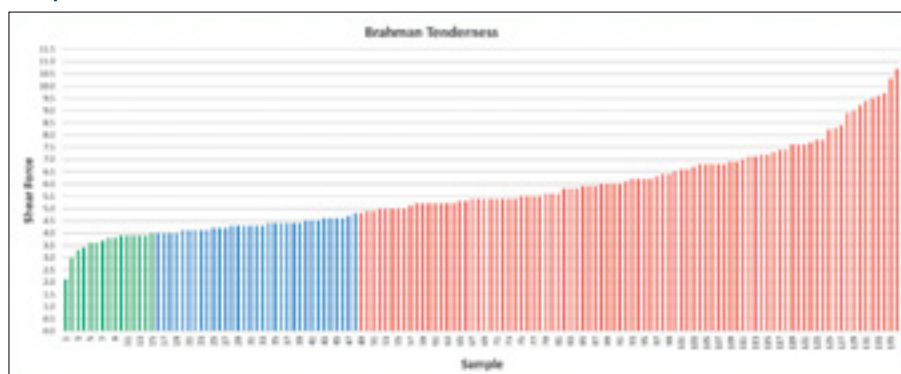
South Africa are close to their goal of obtaining their first single-step analysis or GEBVs. They need approximately 500 more genotypes. ABRI-Breedplan indicated that they will be willing to test single-step analysis once a total of 2 500 genotypes of performance recorded animals are available.

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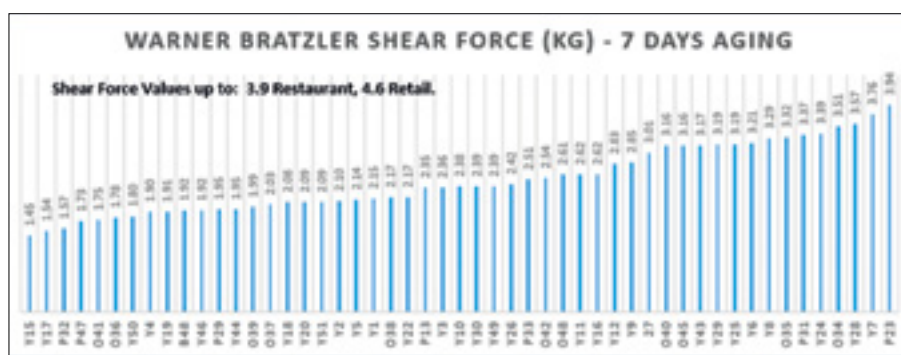
Brahman meat quality: Where are we in 2022?

Group 1



In this group Namibian samples were included, tested as part of the first cycle of the BGP from 2015 to 2017.

Group 2



The importance of meat quality of the Brahman became a priority of Southern African breeders at the start of the Brahman Beef Genomics Project (BGP) a number of years ago. Outside the project breeders felt the necessity to disprove the myths around "the tough meat of humped cattle", as feedlots and other institutions discriminate against Brahman beef.

At this point, the South African Brahman Breeders Society, which co-operates closely with the Namibian Brahman Breeders Society, received back the results of four groups slaughtered and tested at different facilities. Some Namibian samples were included.

Group 1: In this test group 33,8% met retail requirements. The 203 samples were accumulated during the BGP and tested at the Animal Production Institute (API) of the Agricultural Research Council (ARC). The most tender sample had a shear force value of 2,1 and the toughest sample a value of 10,7. This group had been finished (before slaughter) at various ARC test centres and the Sernick Feedlot. The meat quality tests were done by Dr Phillip Strydom of the ARC API, now from the department of animal sciences, University of Stellenbosch.

Group 2: In this group 51 bulls were slaughtered at Vencor in Polokwane after completing a phase C and D test at Bufland. Thirty sires were represented, which offered quite a wide genetic range in the tests.

Some of Prof Hugo's observations: The Warner-Bratzler Shear Force (tenderness) of the 7-day aged meat samples was excellent. It ranged from 1,45 kg to 3,94 kg with an average shear force value of 2,50 kg. For retail purposes, a shear force value below 4,6 is considered acceptable. All the Brahman samples adhered to this requirement. For food service use, a shear force value below 3,9 is considered acceptable. There was only one sample with a shear force value above 3,9 kg. It is impressive that nearly all the 7-day aged Brahman samples were acceptable for use in the restaurant industry.

The absence of dark cutting meat is a sign of good temperament of the animals, good transport conditions and proper handling before slaughter. Absence of dark cutters is usually a clear indication that stress was limited during the transport and slaughtering process.

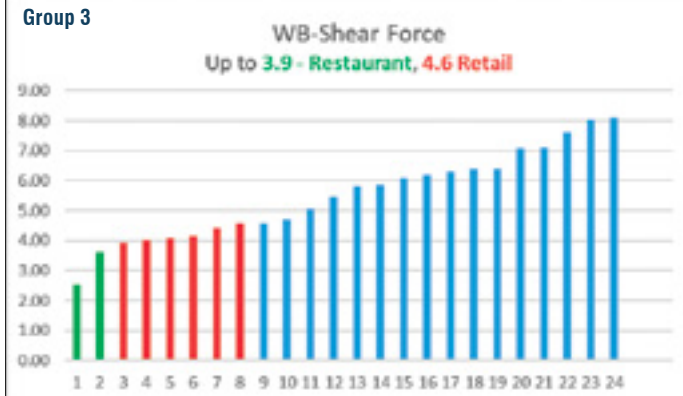
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Group 3



Group 3: The meat samples were sourced from bulls tested for netto-feed intake (NFI/RFI) at the facility of Koos Kooy, director of the Livestock Alliance PTY Ltd in KZN. In total 24 bulls were slaughtered and tested by the University of the Free State.

Observations by Prof Hugo: The Warner-Bratzler Shear Force (tenderness) of the 7-day aged meat samples ranged from 2,51 kg to 8,09

kg with an average shear force value of 5,50 kg. For retail purposes, a shear force value below 4,6 kg is considered acceptable. Nine of the 24 Brahman samples adhered to this requirement. For food service use, a shear force value below 3,9 kg is considered acceptable. This means that only two of the 7-day aged Brahman samples were acceptable for use in the restaurant industry. Fifteen of the 24 Brahman sirloin cuts were not suitable for retail or food service purposes. One must however remember that all sirloin cuts could have benefited from a longer ageing period.



Group 4: A small group of Brahman bulls were slaughtered after being RFI tested at the private Growsafe test facility of Thys Meyer in Lindley. The bulls were slaughtered at the Sernick Feedlot and the samples were tested at the University of the Free State.

In this group all bulls conformed at least to retail requirements, with four acceptable for food services (shear force value equal or less than 3,9).

Important message

- Variation within the breed does exist, which implies that selection for tenderness can be done.
- According to Prof Hugo there was no indication of a significant correlation between hump height and tenderness.



relation between hump height and tenderness. Shear Force is an indication of meat tenderness, and as we know Zebu type cattle are the black sheep of tough meat, along with the perception that the higher the hump, the tougher the meat. There is a tendency to discriminate against humped cattle by various institutions, but both these ideas can be proven wrong with these tests while the promise of selection potential is again accentuated.

Summary

In all these results, the SOP for cut removal was adhered to. Keep in mind that the bulls were tested and finished at different locations across SA and slaughtered at different abattoirs where handling and slaughter procedures may differ slightly.

"Heritability of meat tenderness is stated as being medium to high, so genetic progress can be made relatively fast, depending on factors like slaughter procedure, addition of growth stimulants, ageing, etc." Meat quality is of such importance that, even though it will take longer to accumulate enough samples to initiate the calculation of an EBV, it remains a priority.

The SA Brahman Society would like to thank colleagues and fellow breeders in Namibia for their support, motivation and contribution to promote our breed in Southern Africa.

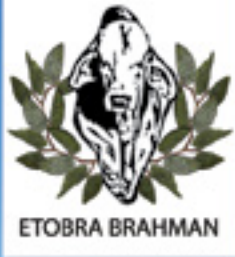
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Alleviate heat stress by incorporating Brahman genetics in cow herds

Brahmans are well adapted and can withstand vast climatic differences. Therefore, this breed is regarded as an ideal cross-bred option to meet, among others, the challenges of climate change. In this excerpt of a recent study by the University of Florida Institute of Food and Ag-

ricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) it is highlighted why Brahman genetics should be incorporated into cow herds to alleviate heat stress. The authors of this article are Kaitlyn Sarlo Davila, Heather Hamblen, Serdal Dikmen, Peter Hansen, Todd Thrift and Raluca Mateescu.

Brahman adaptation

Bos indicus (Zebu cattle of Indian ancestry) breeds such as Brahman are better able to regulate their body temperature under heat stress than *Bos taurus* (cattle of European ancestry) breeds. There are several key adaptations of the hair and skin that allow Brahman cattle to thrive in hot and humid conditions. Brahman cattle have dark skin pigmentation that protects against UV damage from solar radiation. They also have short hair coats (on average 10 mm shorter than Angus – Sarlo Davila et al. 2019) that are light coloured and reflect radiative heat, which help them to remain cooler. This short hair coat also helps cattle sweat more effectively. Most of the heat produced in beef cattle (almost 75% to 80%) is lost through sweating when the sweat evaporates (Collier and Gebremedhin 2015). Short hair coats allow the sweat to evaporate quickly, while thick, dense hair coats trap the sweat against the body and prevent evaporation, which is the major heat loss mechanism for cattle. Brahman cattle also have a higher sweating rate, larger sweat glands and more efficient blood flow from the body core to the skin than *Bos taurus* breeds (Finch 1985; Hansen 2004).

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Brahman will benefit from new synchronisation programme

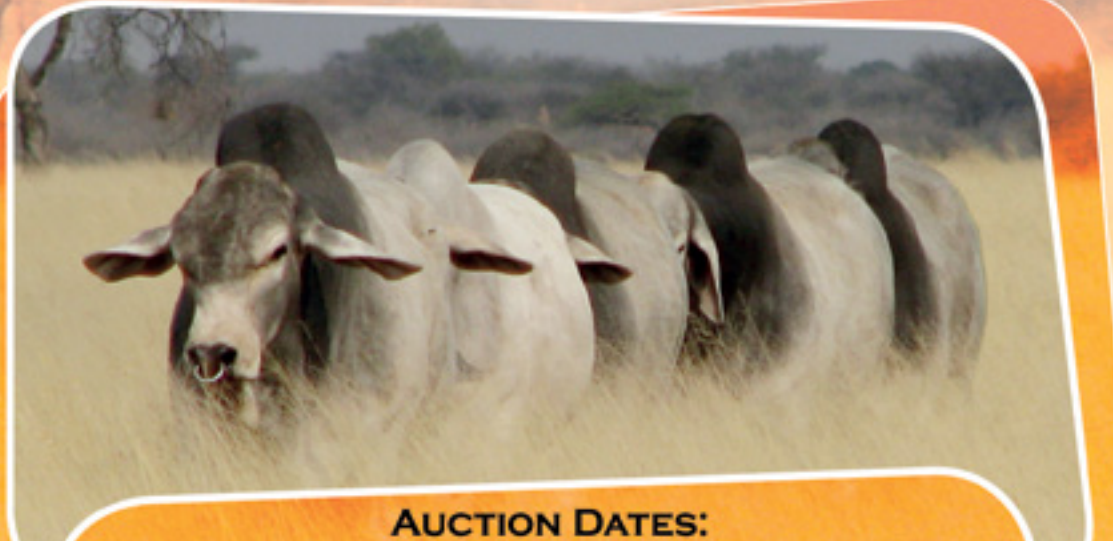
The Windhoek veterinarian Dr Julie Heussquin who brought good news to the annual Brahman breeders day when she discussed modern reproduction technology and where the Brahman fits in. According to her *Bos indicus* breeds, that include the Brahman, are known for a less desirable success rate in artificial insemination (AI) and embryo transfers. "In a recent study on pregnancy it was found that this was due to a lower average response to synchronisation for AI purposes rather than poor conception. More advanced knowledge of Brahman-specific traits enables us to now develop a new synchronisation programme with the addition of a specific hormone that will ensure better results in future." Dr Julie specialises in AI and embryo transfers.





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Alleviate heat stress by incorporating Brahman genetics in cow herds

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Benefits of crossbreeding with Brahman cattle

Many of the challenges associated with Brahman cattle can be overcome by utilising crossbreeding. Hybrid vigour (the increased performance of crossbred animals compared to the average of their purebred parents) is maximised in crosses of *Bos indicus* and *Bos taurus* animals because they are more distantly related to each other. As a result of hybrid vigour, *Bos indicus* × *Bos taurus* crossbred females have 10% greater fertility, 5% greater calf survival, 12,5% greater weaning rate, 31,75 kg greater calf weight at weaning, and 37% greater longevity compared to purebred females (Thrift and Thrift 2003). The other advantage of crossbreeding is breed complementarity (the desirable blending of characteristics from two breeds). When done correctly, blending of *Bos taurus* and *Bos indicus* breed traits can result in an animal that is both adapted to the harsh climates and acceptable to traditional marketing systems. One key to crossbreeding successfully is determining the optimum proportion of each breed.

Recommended Brahman incorporation

The question then remains: When using crossbreeding, what is the optimum proportion of Brahman genetics to incorporate in the cow herd? Two studies utilised the multibreed herd at the University of Florida to answer this question.

The multibreed herd consists of purebred Brahman and Angus cattle as well as crossbreds with varying proportions of the two breeds. Sarlo Davila et al. (2019) observed the internal body temperature of 335 heifers from the multibreed herd using an iButton thermometer placed inside a blank CIDR (a controlled internal drug release, often loaded with progesterone and used to synchronise ovulation in cat-

tle before artificial insemination) and inserted vaginally into each animal. Cattle were observed under extreme heat stress conditions during the summer months in 2016 and 2017. The temperature humidity index is an indicator of heat stress and combines both temperature and humidity in a single measure. This index was used to characterise the environmental conditions when the internal temperature was measured. In this study, heat stress was considered extreme when the THI was between 84 and 86 for at least one hour. Figure 1 shows the body temperatures observed for cattle with different Brahman and Angus percentages. Cattle with as little as 25% Brahman influence were able to stay significantly cooler than purebred Angus cattle. However, only cattle that were 75% Brahman were able to stay as cool as the purebred Brahman. The relationship between Brahman percentage and internal body temperature was found to be linear. Every time that the animals experienced high heat stress, the percentage of Brahman genetics helped them to decrease their internal temperature. Figure 1 shows that, for every 25% increase in Brahman genetics, the average body temperature dropped by 1,7°C.

While the slightly over 0,56°C body temperature difference between Angus and Brahman may not seem like a large difference, it is important to also take into account cattle behaviour and activity during these periods of high heat stress when the internal body temperature was recorded. Dikmen et al. (2018) evaluated grazing behaviour of cattle from the UF multibreed herd under extreme heat stress. Cattle were fitted with a GPS collar to track their movement across the pasture during the day. Purebred Brahman cattle spent significantly more time grazing in the pasture while purebred Angus cattle remained in the shade, not grazing, for most of the day. Angus cattle only grazed during the early morning, evening and night while Brahman cattle grazed throughout the day. The greater the percentage of Brahman genetics cattle had, the more time they spent grazing. Therefore, Brahman cattle are able to stay cooler under hot conditions while still grazing.

Conclusion

Incorporating Brahman genetics into the cow herd alleviates heat stress. It is recommended that cattle be between 25% and 75% Brahman to be adapted to the hot, humid climate of Florida, although the degree of heat stress varies across the state. Cattle with least 25% Brahman are able to remain cooler than purebred *Bos taurus* breeds, while cattle that are 75% Brahman perform comparably to purebred Brah-

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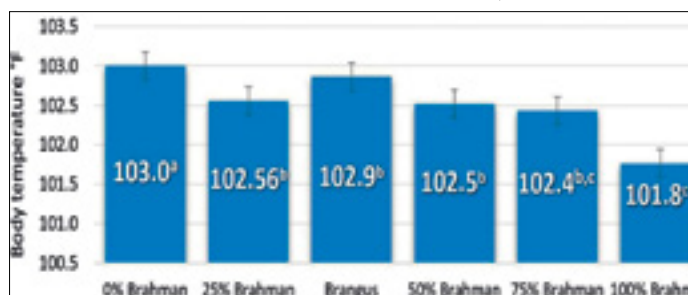


Figure 1. Relationship between breed composition and body temperature under heat stress. Breed groups (a-c) with differing letter superscripts are significantly different ($P < 0.05$). Remaining breed composition is Angus.

Credits: Adapted from Sarlo Davila et al. (2019)

mans. This a large range, and the optimal level of Brahman incorporation into the cow herd is a decision that must be made by each individual producer, taking into account the magnitude of heat stress in their area, the current production level of their herd and the way in which they market their cattle. However, given the increase in productivity to hybrid vigour as well the alleviation of heat stress that results, crossbreeding with Brahman is highly recommended for cow-calf production.

Op die beoordelaarskonferensie se agenda

Dertig beoordelaars en keurders het begin Maart vir die twee dae lange jaarlikse Brahman-beoordelaarskonferensie op St Blaize van Cobus en Angie van der Merwe in die Gobabis-omgewing saamgetrek waar opnuut kennis geneem is van dié ras se geweldige positiewe aandeel in die nasionale beeskudde. Brahman-diere en -kruisings oorheers steeds getalle op veilings en in die slagmark met 'n marktaandeel van minstens 70%.

Verrigtinge is met 'n steakbraai afgesluit en beoordelaars en keurders is met 'n nuwe visie huis toe om die Brahman-vaandel nog hoër te dra.

Keuring: Afgesien van die feit dat die Namibiese Brahman-telers al vir jare aan die voorpunt van tegnologiese en genomiese vooruitgang in die beesbedryf staan, word 'n intensiewe en uitgebreide keuringsproses gevolg om diere te evalueer.

Vir fenotipiese keuring wat elke dier ondergaan, word 'n keurkaart met 15 verskillende ras-eienskappe vir strukturele korrektheid toegepas. Vir elke eienskap word 'n punt uit 9 gegee. Diere wat nie 5 uit 9 haal nie, word as ondergemiddeld beskou en gediskwalifiseer.

Praktiese evaluering is gedoen om aan beoordelaars/keurders te verduidelik hoe die ideale bees wat die wêreld vandag soek daaruit behoort te sien. Baie klem is geplaas op die seleksie van mediumraam-tipes wat oor die vermoë beskik om vet op die veld aan te sit en ver kan loop (struktureel korrek), asook makheid, maklike kalwing, goeie uiers en spene. Dit is die tipe diere wat kommersiële boere en telers in die mark soek.

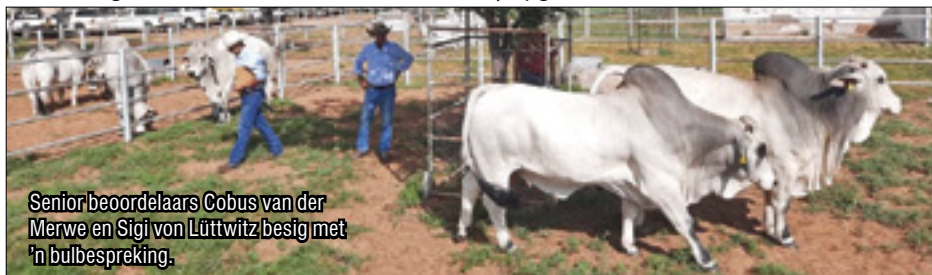
Skoubeoordeling: Heelwat minder diere teenoor vorige jare is verlede jaar vir skoue ingeskryf. Stoetdiere wat wel vertoon is, het goeie eienskappe van die ras verteenwoordig. Beoordelaars het probeer om die diere met die minste foute te plaas. Daar is ook teen oorvet diere gediskrimineer omdat hulle nie die Brahman-ras bevorder nie. Tydens die interras-beoordeling van die Windhoek-skou het PG Butler van die VSA as gasbeoordelaar opgetree waar hy Namibiese Brahmane as wêreldklas beskou het. "Namibië hoef vir geen ander land terug te staan nie, al geskied produksie in harde, ekstensiewe toestande," het hy opgemerk.



Brahman-beoordelaars let op hoe diere uit die St Blaize-stoet van Cobus van Merwe geëvalueer word.



Junior beoordelaar Hueston Groenewald wat 'n vooraf bespreking van bulle gelei het.



Senior beoordelaars Cobus van der Merwe en Sigi von Lüttwitz besig met 'n bulbespreking.



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Selecting for fertility to boost profits

Wayne Upton, Beefcentral, Australia

Female reproductive rate

Female reproductive rate is one of the main profit drivers in a beef cattle enterprise. Research, notably through Beef CRC in the early 2000s, highlighted the scope for genetic improvement of reproduction in *Bos indicus* and tropically adapted breeds in Australia.

Daughters of the best Brahman sires produced almost 30% more calves than daughters of the worst Brahman sires. We know these results are due to genetic differences, as the daughters were from randomly allocated dams run under the same environmental conditions.

The research, both in Australia and internationally, showed that two component traits of lifetime reproductive performance were highly heritable. Those traits were age at puberty, and the ability of females to conceive early while rearing their first calf (first post-partum anestrus interval – PPAI).

Accurate measurement of age at puberty requires serial ovarian ultrasound scanning of young heifers to detect the age at which they reach puberty. Scanning is required to pick the date at which the first calf females return to oestrus or heat.

Practical solution

For most seedstock breeders scanning females to detect age at puberty and PPAI is out of the question but recording days-to-calving is quite practical. Days-to-calving is easily recorded, requiring the date that the bull was introduced to the mating group and the birth date result-

ing from that mating. Cows that do not calve are penalised in the evaluation.

While days-to-calving does not have the same high heritability as age at puberty and PPAI, it is much simpler to measure these traits as well as lifetime reproductive performance.

The new single-step Breedplan analysis will use days-to-calving plus genomic information to give more accurate indicators of the genetic potential for reproductive performance in both females and males. Days-to-calving is the trait used as an EBV in Breedplan and the accuracy of days-to-calving has been improved by genomic information.

While genomics can add significant information to the evaluation, it does not stand alone. Accurate genomic information requires a reference population that is well-recorded for all fertility traits and whose genetic profile has been associated with the level of performance for the traits of interest.

Single-step Breedplan analysis is the most up-to-date method of incorporating DNA marker information into the Breedplan analysis, in conjunction with the more traditional phenotypic measures. Currently there are major projects building a reference population worldwide.

Adding bulls to the equation

Bull breeding soundness evaluation (BBSE) has been used in the industry for many years to increase the chance that young bulls being purchased are sound and fertile.

Private industry consultant John Bertram

has been a long-term advocate of BBSE and has been involved in training young veterinarians in the BBSE assessment at the University of Queensland Veterinary School for many years.

"The industry is moving in the right direction, with more breeders and buyers recognising the importance of testing young bulls prior to expecting them to produce calves in a natural mating situation," he said.

BBSE is important at the genetic level as there is a relationship between bull soundness at a young age and the reproductive performance of their daughters. However, as with all phenotypic measures, to use it as genetic criteria, it needs to be turned into an EBV. There is an EBV available for percentage normal sperm that will allow breeders to select genetically superior males.

Adding genetically superior males into the equation has two effects: the bulls will produce more calves in their working life, and their daughters will have higher fertility.

Breedplan uses the known association between days-to-calving and male traits such as scrotal size to increase accuracy of both traits. Over time the EBV for percentage normal sperm will be correlated to the female fertility traits and used in a balanced breeding index.

The potential for genetic improvement of fertility has never been brighter with the implementation of phenotypic and genotypic measures of fertility. For the industry to benefit, more breeders and bull buyers need to recognise the value and select their replacement bulls on the improved information.

Carbon footprint: Ruminants are part of the solution

To ensure long-term sustainability and ecological resilience of agricultural landscapes, cropping and grazing management protocols are needed that can regenerate soil systems and ecosystem functions previously lost by neglect and destructive management practices. Fortunately, many problems caused by some current cropping and grazing agriculture practices can be avoided by ecologically sensitive management of ruminants in mixed crop and grazing agro-ecosystems.

Effective soil management measures provide the most significant possibilities for achieving sustainable use of agricultural land amid a changing and increasingly variable climate. Regenerative agricultural practices restore soil health and ecosystem function to support ecologically healthy and resilient agro-ecosystems. These practices improve net profitability and enhance ecosystem and watershed function.

Grassland ecosystems co-evolved with herbivores over many thousands of years as complex, dynamic ecosystems comprised of grasses, soil biota, grazers and predators, that deteriorate in the absence of periodic grazing. Ruminant livestock are therefore an important tool for achieving sustainable agriculture with appropriate grazing management.

A key element is that grazing cattle on permanent perennial grasslands with appropriate management helps develop soil biology to improve soil carbon, rainfall infiltration and soil fertility. Thus, much more carbon dioxide equivalents are sequestered into the soil than are emitted by cattle in that management unit. Such management increases the production of forages, allowing for more livestock to provide improved economic returns compared to conventional methods.

Permanent cover of forage plants is highly effective in reducing soil erosion and increasing soil infiltration, and ruminants consuming grazed forages under appropriate management results in considerably more carbon sequestration than emissions.

Ruminant animals like cattle contribute to the maintenance of healthy soils and grasslands, and proper grazing management can reduce the industry's carbon emissions and overall footprint, according to a Texas A&M AgriLife Research scientist. Dr Richard Teague, professor emeritus in the department rangeland, wild-life and fisheries management and senior scientist of the Norman Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture and the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Vernon, said his recent research, "The role of ruminants in reducing agriculture's carbon footprint in North America", published in the Soil and Water Conservation Society's Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, presents sustainable solutions for grazing agriculture. His research showed appropriate grazing management practices in cattle production are among the solutions for concerns related to agriculture's impact on the environment. Moreover, it serves as a call to action for the implementation of agricultural practices that can improve the resource base, environment, productivity and economic returns. An excerpt of his article appears alongside.

Incorporating forages with ruminants to manage regeneration of ecological function in agro-ecosystems can elevate soil carbon, improve soil ecological function, and enhance biodiversity and wildlife habitat if incorporated within goal-oriented planning and monitoring protocols.

In non-cropping and cropping areas, grazing ruminants in a manner that enhances soil health reduces the carbon footprint of agriculture much more than by reducing ruminant numbers and provides highly nutritious food that has sustained pastoral livelihoods and cultures for centuries.

The scientific investigations that call for the reduction or elimination of cattle and livestock agricultural production must consider

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Focus shift to *Bos indicus*

Beef production needs to increase 120% by 2050 to feed a growing world population, and 70% of this production increase is expected from beef industries located in subtropical and tropical regions of the planet. *Bos indicus*-influenced cattle predominate in these regions and are typically managed using practices developed for *Bos taurus* breeds in temperate zones, despite being different subspecies reared in different environmental conditions.

Bos indicus cattle display distinct social responses compared with *B. taurus* counterparts, which must be considered in management plan-

ning as these traits directly impact cattle performance and welfare. Nutritional planning in tropical and subtropical conditions must also include management to optimise utilisation of warm-season forages, whereas nutritional requirements of cattle raised within these conditions still need to be further established.

As an example, *B. indicus*-influenced cattle appear to have an intrinsic metabolic compromise to cope with environmental constraints and altered energy requirements due to body composition and heat tolerance. Accordingly, nutritional interventions to enhance beef production need to be specifically tailored and validated in *B. indicus*-influenced cattle. *Bos indicus*-influenced cattle also produce carcasses with less marbling than *B. taurus* cattle.

This outcome is mostly related to reduced intramuscular adipocyte volume in *B. indicus* breeds, which may be an inherent mechanism to facilitate heat dissipation and grant the thermotolerance required for adaptation to tropical and subtropical climates.

Nonetheless, there is still a plethora of research-based information needed to fully comprehend the social and welfare aspects, nutrient demand and use, and carcass development of *B. indicus*-influenced cattle. Efforts

"If climate change occurs as predicted, we will have a greater and greater dependence on tropically adapted livestock. Brahman cattle have important genes to contribute to adaptability to heat, humidity and parasites. Brahman are important, they're different, and they're going to be even more important, at least as contributors to crossbreeding." Dr Tom Welsh of the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biosciences

Cow productivity can be increased by up to 21% through properly designed crossbreeding systems, thereby reducing the carbon footprint of beef production. The fact that there are large differences in the kg calf weaned per livestock unit between certain genotypes, points to genetic differences and holds the potential for improvement through selection and the use of complementarity between breeds. (Agricultural Research Council of South Africa)

Carbon footprint ...

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the full impacts of the entire food production chain, and of different cropping and livestock alternatives.

Collectively, conservation agriculture aimed at regenerating soil health and ecosystem function supports ecologically healthy and resilient agroecosystems, improves net profitability and enhances watershed function.

When we're talking about science, we need to look at the full spectrum of what is happening, weigh the positives and negatives of our options and be honest about the outcomes. Then, we seek the most sustainable solution. (www.agrilifetoday.tamu.edu)

to understand biological functions specific to this cattle subspecies are critical to optimising beef production in tropical or subtropical environments and meet the increasing global demand for beef.

(Based on presentations at the Beef Species Symposium: Cattle adapted to Tropical and Subtropical Environments, at the annual meeting of the American Society of Animal Science).



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