



Town Creek Farm

The GRIT

WINTER 2014

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Total Commitment



Since 1993

Strong Demand for Brangus and Ultrablack Bulls and Bred Brangus Heifers

CATTLEMEN FROM COAST TO COAST ARE CONFIDENT

current infrastructure is favorable for another two to three years of strong tail winds for the beef cattle industry.

Looking back, as fall 2013 progressed, cattle and feed prices continued to migrate in favor of cattlemen; cattle prices gained momentum while feed prices dropped. After a rocky start to 2013, cattle markets finished strong. This energy has translated into more good news: 2014 is starting with record high cattle prices, lower feed prices and very strong demand.

Strong appetites for quality, rugged bulls genetically bred to sustain demands from commercial cattlemen, likewise, found momentum from our industry's positive operating environment.

Town Creek Farm Sale offering on October 19, 2013, was no exception. Town Creek Farm owner, Milton Sundbeck, and his team, warmly welcomed a capacity crowd of customers, friends and family as nearly 200 buyers and bidders from 10 states and Paraguay, South America, traveled to appraise the Town Creek Farm offering.

When the final gavel tap sounded, 140 Town Creek Farm bulls averaged \$4738 and 258 customer-owned commercial bred heifers averaged \$2127. The sale grossed \$1,218,100.

The top selling lot in the bull sale earned a price tag of \$12,750. Lot 58, TCF Sleep Easy 223Y, was purchased by Drawdy Brothers of Florida.

Black River Brangus, Lynn and Dana White, Monterey, Louisiana, took home the second high selling bull, TCF Sleep Easy 18Y.

One-half interest and one-half possession in the bull sold for \$11,500.

The Town Creek Farm Commercial Bred Heifer Sale was a continuation of the 18-year running Cow

Creek Ranch Commercial Bred Heifer Sale held each fall in Aliceville, Alabama. Heifers were sired by Cow Creek Ranch bulls bred back to Cow Creek Ranch and Town Creek Farm bulls. The multi-generational, genetically-tracked heifers commanded strong interest and demand from buyers.

Customer-owned heifers were offered by Williamson Cattle Co., ranching in Alabama and Florida, and a 16-year consignor to the Cow Creek Ranch Sale; River Oaks Farm of Arkansas, 15-year consignor; 14-year consignor, CP Bar Ranch; and 9-year consignor, Megehee Cattle Company, both of Mississippi; along with five-year consignor, Montgomery Farms, and first-year consignor, B&B Farm, both cattlemen from Alabama.

The Town Creek Farm team extends a heartfelt thank you to all those who attended and took part in our sale.



Tips to Keeping Profit Inside Your Ranch Gates

Town Creek Farm hosted a cattlemen's field day featuring an industry-wide panel discussion regarding tips and proven practices to keep more dollars inside your ranch gates this past fall. Co-sponsors of the event were Clay County Co-op, West Point, Mississippi; Pennington Seed; Purina; and Zoetis, Inc. (formerly Pfizer).

HEALTHY CALVES

Leading off discussions was panel member Sam Blakeney who focused on three value-added management practices that influence prices of feeder calves. As a veteran cattle broker for Prairie Livestock (PLI), West Point, Mississippi, Blakeney assists in buying and selling 50,000 to 60,000 calves annually to feedlots, conditioning lots and ranchers nationwide.

Blakeney said first and foremost you must have a healthy calf. He suggests that cattlemen create a vaccination schedule for their cattle and follow it. He encouraged cattlemen to implement an immunization schedule for respiratory and clostridial diseases and cow/calf operators to have a reproductive vaccination program.

Another health factor that can affect sale weight, and ultimately dollars in your pocket, is internal and external parasitism. Blakeney recommended cattlemen to deworm cattle and calves for parasites as needed and scheduled.

"At PLI, we pay more money for calves that have been BVD-PI tested. This is something new, but it's very important to us as cattle buyers. If you don't test your calves, at the very minimum, I would recommend you test your replacement heifers in your herd every year," said Blakeney. PLI tests every calf that arrives at their receiving pens prior to allowing them to enter the facility.

BVD-PI is a persistently infected (PI) bovine viral diarrhea virus (BVDV). According to estimates, the prevalence of PI cattle in the U.S. population ranges from 0.13 percent to two percent. About four percent to ten percent of U.S. beef herds will have at least one PI-positive animal. Most PI-positive cattle die shortly after birth, but a significant number live to make it into the breeding herd or the feedlot. A PI-positive calf constantly sheds the virus and exposes healthy animals to the virus.

CASTRATE YOUR STEER CALVES

The second value-added management practice Blakeney recommended was castration. "You are leaving money on the



Field Day sponsors include (L to R) host, Milton Sundbeck, Town Creek Farm; Pennington Seed represented by Jimmy Ray Parish; Robert Pegues of Zoetis; John Elliot, Clay County Co-op; and Matt Karisch with Purina Cattle Nutrition.



Panel members were (L to R) Sam Blakeney, Prairie Livestock Inc.; Jimmy Ray Parish, Pennington Seed; Jacob Megehee, Megehee Cattle Co.; and moderator, John Elliot, Clay County Co-op.

table if you do not castrate your bull calves," said Blakeney. Records prove that intact bull calves receive a lower price per pound compared to steers.

KNOW WHAT YOUR CALVES ARE WORTH

Marketing calves was the third practice Blakeney discussed. "Know what your calves are worth. Do your homework before you begin the marketing process, said Blakeney. Several marketing options are available to cattlemen. You can sell your calves to a broker. You can private treaty sell your calves. They can go to an auction barn or sell through a video auction."

The question of implants was raised during the question and answer session. Blakeney said each operation is different. "Unless you are marketing to an all-natural market, not using implants is like leaving money on the table," said Blakeney.

BRANGUS BULLS HUSTLE AND DON'T HANG UP IN SHADE OR PONDS

Jacob Megehee, veteran cattleman and president of the Mississippi Cattlemen's Association, says there are three aspects to a successful cattle enterprise. First is management. Secondly are genetics, and thirdly, marketing. For the 71-year-old cattleman, Brangus cattle are core to providing Megehee a profitable return on his investment year in and year out.

Megehee's comments and shared thoughts were made as the second panel member to address the group.

"Brangus bulls hustle and don't hang up in the shade or pond," said Megehee, which are critical production obstacles to cattlemen in the Southern one-third tier of the country. Brangus cattle tolerate heat and humidity of Southern environments and forage and work during unbearable breeding months of June and July. Megehee noted that Brangus cattle and Brangus sired calves are acceptable, marketable and are good mothers that protect their babies.

"The Brangus sired heifer business has been dynamic for me, and the steer side has been just as good," Megehee stated. Megehee's Brangus sired steers routinely top steer markets and in 2012 he tied for the top-selling pen of steers at Mississippi Homeplace Video Auction. "When something is not broke, do not change."

Megehee has a nine-year history of marketing Cow Creek Ranch Brangus sired heifers at premium prices and has been using Brangus bulls for 13 years. In 2012, Megehee sold the high selling pen of heifers for a record price of \$2800 per head. At Town Creek Farm's October 19, 2013, bred heifer sale, Megehee's heifers, again, were among the top-selling heifers in the sale.

SOIL TESTING IS THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP IN MANAGING FORAGES

Jimmy Ray Parish, Central Garden Distribution Territory Manager for Pennington Seed, cited soil testing as the most important management practice in forage maintenance. "Forages are 95 to 98 percent of feedstuff for cattle, Parish said. It needs to be managed properly. Forage will not perform in poor pH soil. You need to know the pH of your soil; 6.5 is perfect."

Parish went on to mention improved varieties of fescue and clovers on the market and encouraged cattlemen to seek out high performing grasses.



TCF Bull Development and Genetic Update

TOWN CREEK FARM BULL DEVELOPMENT FACILITY is currently stocked with 185 bulls slated to sell in our October 18, 2014, sale. Ninety-two (92) bulls are spring 2013-born and the remaining 93 are fall 2013 yearlings. This is an impressive, consistent, uniform set of bulls.

Our bulls are grown in 40 to 50 acres traps on limited-intake, high roughage, forage-based, low-energy rations composed of up to 60 percent haylage, which is grown and harvested on Town Creek Farm. The balance of the ration is made up of molasses, commodities, and by-products. Our feeding recipe, managed by nutritionist, Sam Sneed, is designed to achieve moderate daily gains without subjecting bulls to adverse effects typically experienced from high starch-concentrate rations. Bulls are handled on horseback for gathering and treating, (ATV's on occasion) and we employ routine foot traffic among bulls.

Yearling Bulls Ultrasound Data

On November 18th we scanned 93 yearling bulls. We are encouraged by how well our bulls scanned, exceeding our expectations on our high roughage, forage-based diet. The scan data indicates that our genetics and development program are right on track to provide commercial bull customers with big volume bulls that represent balances between maternal and carcass.

Scanned bulls had an average intramuscular fat (IMF) or marbling score of 4.19 percent; Ribeye area per cwt. of 1.13; rib fat thickness of .22; and had an average scrotal circumference of 36.02 centimeters.

Midway Evaluation and Culling Process

In efforts to continually monitor quality of our bulls, we weigh and visually appraise phenotype and feet and legs on a regular basis. Both our spring and fall born bulls were weighed and sorted on January 10th and will be reweighed in 45 to 60 days. Our goal is to develop bulls in a disciplined program that identifies efficiency and real-world performance. Our development strategies focus on growing bulls that hold up, have longevity and sound feet and joints.

Replacement Yearling Heifers Ultrasound Data

Town Creek Farm uses all practical tools available to advance our program and benefit our customers. Many of our customers use TCF bulls to sire their replacement heifers. We have an obligation to prove, not only fertility in the dam's of our bulls, but carcass traits as well. Additionally, ultrasounding heifers doubles the amount of data we collect on a single calf crop.

Our yearling heifers were scanned right along with our yearling bulls on November 18th. Intramuscular fat (IMF) percentages were particularly impressive not only in the Town Creek Farm herd, but in the herd of Bull Production Partner, Lynn White, of Monterey, Louisiana. Lynn's replacement heifers averaged over five percent on IMF while Town Creek Farm's average was just under five percent. These gals are functional, easy fleshing and sound.

We invite you to stop by Town Creek Farm anytime to view our bulls and operation. It will be well invested time.



Yearling bulls in growing pens on Town Creek Farm.



Since 1993



Town Creek Farm

Brangus & Ultrablack Bull Sale and Commercial Bred Heifer Sale West Point, Mississippi

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2014 • 12 NOON

150 Town Creek Farm Brangus & Ultrablack Bulls

Practical, functional bulls developed on a high roughage forage-based ration in 40 to 50 acre traps. Sound footed, problem-free bulls guaranteed fertile and reproductively sound. Largely Cow Creek Ranch based genetics.

300 Commercial Brangus Bred Heifers

Multi-generation genetically-tracked heifers sired by Cow Creek Ranch bulls and bred back to Cow Creek Ranch and Town Creek Farm bulls.

Bulls Sell Trich Tested • Johnes Tested • BVD PI Tested





MISSISSIPPI STATE LIVESTOCK JUDGING TEAM lent helping hands during Town Creek Farm's fall Field Day and Town Creek Farm Bull and Commercial Female Sales. The team, under the leadership of Mississippi State Livestock Judging Team Coach, Brett A. Crow, performed every task within their reach and capabilities during the two events. Nearly every team member has extensive exposure to the cattle business and were right at home lending their hands and heads.

It's refreshing to see team members exhibit values associated with kids who grew up in rural America. Like teamwork and embracing values of hard work and discipline. Respecting people and nature and being resourceful, intuitive and applying common sense. And, valuing jobs well done. Thank you.

It Is Not Only Genetics, It is Consistency of Genetics That Makes Economic Differences in Your Pockets.

I WAS HONORED TO VISIT WHITE'S FAMILY RANCH on the flats of the Mississippi Delta in Louisiana on the first days of January. The entire Town Creek Farm crew made the trip.

Lynn and Dana White have been following the Cow Creek Ranch genetic program (now Town Creek Farm) and trusting and working exclusively with this genetic pool for 15 plus years.

As you probably expect, there was little grass in January and Lynn's cattle were managed on hay and minerals; the most economical and cheapest way these genetics can be handled. Every cow had a calf at side or was bred. Cow Creek Ranch genetics were built to last in these kinds of environments. The management system was simple and effective.

Lynn does an outstanding job selecting the right kind of herd bulls and nearly every year he invested money in registered females from the original Cow Creek cow herd. Now, he shares ownership of some of the top Town Creek Farm bulls which originated from the same gene pool. He follows the same tight, consistent genetic and selection program as we do at Town Creek Farm and pay back time has come.

Lynn shared with us the ultrasound resume sheet of his replacement yearling heifers; 49 head – all of them, no cheating. They averaged as follows: Yearling weight - 822.76 pounds; Backfat - .26 inches; Ribeye Area/CWT; 1.25 sq. inches; Intramuscular Fat (Marbling) - 5.05%.

What makes the difference here is, not only are these numbers that would top markets if sent to packing plants but, *consistency of performance* which comes from the *consistent genetic pool* behind every heifer. These numbers are not "potential," they are reality from a cattleman who has followed our program for a long period of time. Town Creek Farm has the genetic pool and bulls to take your whole herd to the next level.

Congratulations to the White family and thank you for sharing this information with us. Cheers!

– by Federico Maisonnave, Paraguay, South America

Town Creek Farm Installs Innovative Hay Feeders

FEEDING HAY IN THE WINTERTIME ON THE BLACK PRAIRIE IN MISSISSIPPI can create the biggest mess in pastures that you would ever want to see. Last winter we had ruts so huge you could float a canoe in them. It was so ugly I could hardly stand to look at my pastures. We lost four calves that were pushed into the mud around hay rings and stepped on by feeding cows.

I have been bound and determined to one day find a way to beat the Black Prairie mud. In the spring of last year I was in Virginia visiting with my friend Gordy Keys on his Angus farm near Upperville. While driving around with him, I noticed his fence line hay feeding system. It turns out the State of Virginia helps farmers install and pay for concrete hay pads located on fence lines to keep tractors out of the pastures to control erosion that can wind up in Chesapeake Bay.

Taking their design into mind, we constructed a similar system in all of our cow pastures on Town Creek Farm, as seen in the photos below. Using recovered clinker from Holcim's cement plant in Artesia, Mississippi, we built pads that set up like concrete and installed hay panels on them manufactured by Orman Machine of West Point.

So far they are working great and I will be glad to share the design to anyone interested in building some.

– by Milton Sundbeck

