

EVANS BEEFMASTERS

A Bit of Gayle's History and Experience

While a senior in high school in 1949, my father purchased a Beefmaster bull to cross on his Hereford cows. It was obvious to me that the first cross Beefmaster calves were superior to the Hereford calves. I researched information on Tom Lasater and became very interested in the breed he had created. In 1953, I purchased 5 pair and a bull. Their calves were very good and for 3 consecutive years all of them were males. In 1956, I purchased 15 yearling heifers and was finally able to get some heifer calves. It seemed like if I followed the Lasater's 6 essentials I could barely maintain my numbers. Somewhat later, I purchased 65 head of Beefmaster cows and my herd continued to grow.



In 1960, I took over as manager of a purebred Angus herd with the challenge of producing 400 head of 400 pound calves per year by order of the owner, who had organized the Utah Angus Association. After 6 years of striving to reach that goal by purchasing the best Angus semen available, even some from Europe, I wasn't successful.

The owner then inquired as to what would be my suggestion to get larger calves. I told him I thought it would be necessary to cross breed. He said "we can't do that to this nice herd of Angus cows." I told him that 90% of our calves were sold on the open market, not as purebreds, so we could use some of the cows for crossbreeding and not affect the purebred operation. His answer was "how many cows do you want to try cross breeding?" My response was 150 head. He said "my gosh, I thought you might want 10 or 12." I convinced him that I would like to try a number of different breeds for about 4 years to see which would work the best and it would require about 50 crossbred calves from each breed to draw any real conclusions. We had been performance testing the herd and his answer to my request was "you can use the poorest 150 cows."

I then began crossing 3 different breeds per year and ended up using a total of 12 different breeds. The exotic breeds were just being imported into the US at the time and I involved a number of them. It was quite a circus during that time. While calving we had to assist a great number of cows and the death loss of calves was excessive. We were able to

produce heavier calves but not enough weight difference to make up the death loss.

The Beefmasters were the only breed that calved with very little assistance and the heifers readily bred as yearlings. Their calves weaned 56 pounds heavier than the purebred Angus. The Beefmaster cross heifers would also breed on time as yearlings and rebreed on time as 2-year-olds. The owner then said "you have convinced me it will be okay to cross with Beefmasters." I then bred the entire herd to Beefmaster bulls. At weaning time, I had the calves sorted into various groups and he said "did you cross all the cows to Beefmaster?" I smiled and said "just like you told me." By then I had some Beefmaster cross heifers which had weaned 140 pound heavier calves than the straight Angus.

One of his responses was "what are we going to do for replacements?" I said to use Beefmaster cross heifers. He finally said "okay, but I want you to only keep black and polled." At weaning time, I had the heifer calves sorted into two groups: replacement and sale, all of which had been sired by Beefmaster bulls. The boss looked at them and said "I'm not much of a cattleman but aren't there some better heifers in the sale pen than some of them in the replacement pen?" I said "yes, but if you will notice they are either red or have horns." His next statement was "tell you what, I'm going back to the office and you can do anything you want with them." That was in 1970, and by 1980 my sons and I had changed the herd so that all of the mother cows were at least 3/4 Beefmaster, making their calves eligible for certification. In 1988, we purchased this herd and combined them with our own purebred herd. After nearly 30 years, we still follow Lasater's 6 essentials and don't worry about color or horns because they are not essential traits.



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