

BRAHMAN – BREED WITHOUT BOUNDS

Brahman's first appearance on the scene in 1954 and the influence it had on the stud and commercial beef cattle industry had caused a euphoric stir or "tsunami" among all concerned. The result of all this was of such lasting significance, that the word Brahman has become synonymous with successful red meat production.

With the traditional beef chain where the flow of genes transpires from the stud breeder to commercial cattle farmers and eventually the end consumer, the Brahman has established itself to such an extent, that only a layman will not recognize the influence of the breed in commercial herds or the large number of synthetic breeds that – even worldwide – have been generated with much success from the Brahman, especially during the past eighteen months.

The needs of end consumers that reflect the requirements of the whole industry which also include feedlots, meat dealers, butchereries, restaurants and the housewife that do the purchases, are confirmed by the fact that it is chiefly Brahman meat that lands on the tables of most end consumers.

One can therefore confidently conclude from what has been mentioned above that the end consumer in South Africa has found in the Brahman a genotype that can perform productively and adequately in most biological environments. It is further confirmed that the reason why the present day commercial cattle farmer identifies so closely with the Brahman is simply because the breed has the most profitable production traits required by the commercial red meat farmer.

Stud breeding is in no way and can no longer be described as a hobby. Brahman breeders' "best genetic material" complies and slots in with the biological environment, production systems, management practices and economical expectations of the beef chain. By its utilization of BREEDPLAN as genetic evaluation system and BLUP technology (BLUP = Best Linear Unbiased Prediction), the Society is instrumental in putting at its members' disposal a very powerful breeding tool, viz Breeding Values (EBVs) for various traits. These EBVs enable the breeder to target his breeding programme towards an end product that will meet the requirements of the commercial sector as far as productivity and profitability are concerned.

Sustained selection and in particular advising breeders on factors for selection objectives is an absolute priority with the Society so as to keep abreast of modern breeding techniques. The fact that the Brahman is not in competition with other breeds, but rather complements them, is, as it were the golden thread that runs right through the process if you want to add value to that end product, further sprouts from its genetic uniqueness.

No other breed in South Africa has so many pure types – the White and Red Brahman come primarily to mind. To a lesser extent the Indu-Brazil, Gir, Nellore or even some Guzerat are found in our country today. The sum total of this qualitative genetic variation which no other country can pride itself on, passionately renders significance to concepts like heterosis (hybrid vigour), prepotency, adaptability and particularly maternal traits.

To crown it all, the Brahman, due to its genetic uniqueness and ability to add value, caused a worldwide metamorphosis in that “obsession with breed” simply gave rise to the generation of various “new breeds” from the Brahman. The breed’s beneficial qualitative traits complement other breeds that in many cases have lost irreparable market share. The basic principle of purity for genetic sustainability must, however, always be economically accountable. The Brahman as *Bos Indicus* or *Zebu* has identified itself as the most complete “genetic package” on the market, because it is pre-eminently suited to South African climatological, as well as tropical and sub-tropical conditions.

The Brahman and its uniqueness is driven by a progressive breeding corps, participation in the world’s most advanced genetic evaluation system that integrates pedigree and performance information to select for traits which are correlated to profit, to estimate Breeding Values (EBVs), backed by research, as well as interaction with many member countries across the world through the “World Brahman Federation”.

In short: the Brahman is the “*Breed without Bounds*”. For any enquiries visit www.brahman.co.za, or contact the Brahman Cattle Breeders’ Society of South Africa at 051-4480603.