

**Crossbreeding with**

# **Brahman**



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BRANDON & RACHEL CUTRER



*by Rachel Cutrer*

Since the Brahman F-1 female is known as the “Queen of Cow Country,” it’s only fitting that the Brahman bull be named the king. The Brahman breed revolutionized the coastal commercial beef industry when it was introduced in the early 1900s, with its environmental adaptability, insect resistance, heat tolerance, and those added pounds through hybrid vigor. We believe there is no better cross for the southern United States than a Brahman x *Bos taurus* animal. And in this publication, we will share why.

Today’s beef cattle producers are currently faced with a multitude of challenges in an ever changing beef industry.

Today’s producer has more access to decision making tools like EPDs, genomics, selection indexes and more. In the last few decades, breeds and individual ranches have continued to improve, and the commercial producer has more opportunities than ever before.

**However, the age-old method of crossbreeding a Brahman x *Bos taurus* is still one of the most proven, profitable decisions a rancher can make in improving his herd.** As Dr. Matt Spangler, University of Nebraska-

Lincoln, points out in his publication at <https://beef.unl.edu/beefreports/symp-2007-21-xx.shtml>, no one breed can do it all.

One of the oldest and truest methods of finding that balance is through crossbreeding. Spangler points out that two advantages of crossbreeding include:

- 1) Taking advantage of breed complementarity, and
- 2) capturing heterosis (hybrid vigor).

### **Taking Advantage of Breed Complementarity**

Breed complementarity means matching the strengths of different breeds together. The more “different” the breeds are, the greater the breed complementarity.

Let’s think about the different breeds that exist. There’s many that are polled. There’s many that are black hided. Sometimes you may see a picture of a certain animal and think “What in the world is that animal?” because so many of the breed’s look alike.

### **But, there is only one American Brahman.**

The Brahman breed is one of the most unique breeds, and is a breed like none other. So when you introduce the Brahman breed into your crossbreeding program, you are maximizing breed complementary no matter

what your second breed may be.

*Brahman x Angus - Perfect.*

*Brahman x Hereford - Amazing.*

*Brahman x Shorthorn - We love these.*

*Brahman x Charolais - Outstanding.*

*Brahman x ANYTHING will help you maximize the breed complementarity to get the best of both breeds.*

That's one reason there are so many popular breeds that exist today that have a Brahman base.

## 2. Capturing Hybrid Vigor

When you utilize breed complementary, the natural result is capturing hybrid vigor, or the "extra boost" you get from the two parent breeds. That's why when you cross a Brahman x Angus (or any other breed), you see a lot of heterosis because the breeds are so vastly different.

Years and years of land-grant university research shows that using a Brahman x a Bos taurus animal gives you the maximum amount of heterosis or hybrid vigor possible in the beef industry. And quite simply - more pounds means more profit in today's beef industry.

In the 1960s, Dr. T.C. Cartwright of Texas A&M University pioneered this research that showcased how a Brahman x Hereford cross would out-perform a straight-bred Brahman x Brahman or Hereford x Hereford cross. Since this time, every land grant university in the south has further proven this research.

Heterosis, or hybrid vigor, is defined as the superiority of a crossbred animal when compared to the average of its straightbred parents. The more different the initial parent lines are, the more heterosis you can achieve.

And, the cool thing about hybrid vigor is that it's only available through crossing breeds. There is no hybrid vigor available from within breed matings.

While you will see an increase in your weaning and yearling weights, you will also see an increase in

birthweights when using a Brahman bull. This is why it is important to select low birthweight sires with actual birthweights and EPD data to reduce your calving trouble.

## What Will Happen When You Add a Brahman Bull To Your Crossbreeding Program?

When you introduce a Brahman bull into your program, you're going to notice a lot of improvement. The first thing you'll probably notice is the added performance and gain of your crossbred calves, through increased weaning weights and yearling weights. If you are a producer who sells by the pound, here's an immediate impact to your pocketbooks.

But, probably the biggest value of using Brahman bulls in a crossbreeding program is the resulting F-1 female. This cow is known as the "Queen of Cow Country" because she does more, for longer years in production, on less resources.

So, many of our commercial clients sell their steer calves, or retain ownership through the feedyard, but absolutely love it when they have a heifer calf sired by their BRC Brahman bull because they know that F-1 female is worth her weight in gold. While the Brahman bull will increase birthweight, the F-1 Brahman female will do just the opposite - she suppresses birthweight. She also is known to have longer years in production because she is healthier, hardier, and able to withstand tough conditions. Quite simply, there is no better cow suited for the gulf coast or South Texas.

If you've been considering using Brahman bulls in a crossbreeding program, we invite you to visit the ranch. We believe in these Brahman cattle and would love the opportunity to visit with you .



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Want to learn more about Brahman cattle? Shoot us an email or give us a call. We clearly love Brahman cattle and are happy to share it's benefits with any new breeder.