



# How To Get Started Raising **F-1 Cattle**

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Educational Resource From

Every day, we talk with ranchers in the gulf coast about how to get started with breeding an F1 herd, and using Brahman cattle in that F1 program. If you are ranching in the gulf coast, this is the best type of crossbreeding system to utilize your land, cattle, and resources in the gulf coast environment. This casual guide helps give our perspective on getting started on raising F-1 cattle using a Brahman base.



Here are the main advantages of using Brahman cattle and starting an F-1 program if you are ranching in the southern US or gulf coast:

### 1. The heat tolerance factor.

Brahman cattle are the most heat tolerant breed, and also very insect resistant. So, incorporating these genetics into building a halfblood F-1 herd can help with your cattle withstanding the heat, humidity, insects, and rainfall we find on the gulf coast.

### 2. Climate change.

It's only getting hotter. And more humid. As summer temperatures climb, you have to run cattle that can survive. A lot of breeds talk about hair shedding. That's a great approach, but Brahman cattle are the ultimate hair shedder. Because they're already short haired, and are made through nature to secrete an oily substance in their skin, better than sweat, that will help cool and regulate their body temperatures in the summer. Research shows that when the temperatures get above 84 degrees, purebred Brahman cattle are the most temperature efficient.

### 3. The maximum hybrid vigor or heterosis.

This is another buzzword you see a lot of breeds touting, but the truth is, the MAXIMUM hybrid vigor is attained by crossing species that are the most diverse, or unrelated. That means, Bos Indicus (Brahman) x Bos Taurus. Not Bos Taurus x Bos Taurus. Brahman is called "crossbreeding's common denominator" because it's the constant equation used in crossbreeding. You can breed Brahman to Angus, Hereford, Shorthorn, Charolais, Simmental, SimAngus, basically any breed, and you can get the most genetic diversity and most hybrid vigor.

What does hybrid vigor even mean? It means the genetic explosion you get from crossing the two unrelated parents. So, your calves will be healthier. Your calves will be heavier. (And heavier calves means a higher sale price at weaning).

A lot of people do worry about using Brahman cattle because if you retain ownership, or sell cattle on a grid, you don't want to be penalized for bad carcass quality. We've solved that problem. BRC is leading the breed in carcass quality and has over a decade of carcass ultrasound data and carcass kill data, as well as the breed's only genomically enhanced EPDs. So, you can breed Brahman bulls (or use Brahman cows as your base)

with confidence in carcass quality.

Now that we've outlined the reasons why you should be using Brahman cattle in an F-1 program, let's talk about how to start.



You can take two approaches.

1. Use Brahman bulls on a Bos Taurus cow herd.
2. Use Bos Taurus bulls (usually Angus or Hereford) on a Brahman cow herd.

There is no 'perfect' route, and usually each producer determines what scenario works best for their situation.

**Tip 1.** The biggest factor in this decision is your environment. Let's say you are ranching in south Texas, where it's hotter than a chatahoochie and the mosquitos are the size of your thumb. If you're running a 100 head cow herd, it may be more logical to use a Brahman cow base, since the largest numbers of your herd are 100% Brahman, and only a small % of your herd (just your bulls) are non-Brahman.

Or, vice versa, if you're ranching in Missouri or Kansas, where the weather is cooler, perhaps it might be easier to manage and maintain 4 Brahman bulls and 100 Angus cows, rather than trying to winter 100 Brahman cows.

**Tip 2.** You'll want to consider the birthweight, and

# Two Breeding System Scenarios:



Option 1:

Brahman Bull x Bos Taurus Cows



Option 2:

Bos Taurus Bull x Brahman Cows

reciprocal birthweight effect. A Brahman cow herd will result in a lower overall birthweight in your calves because the Brahman cow will naturally reduce and regulate birthweight. Using Brahman bulls on a Bos Taurus cow herd will get you higher birthweights. That's why if you're going the route of Brahman bulls on a British cow base, you need to select only low birthweight bulls, and never breed to British heifers.

**Tip 3.** Consider your existing cow herd and capabilities. If you already have a herd of Hereford cows, then you could very quickly and easily get into the F-1 business simply by buying Brahman bulls. Or, you could use the

strategy of AI'ing your British cow base to Brahman bulls, and then turning out your old bulls as clean up bulls. Or, vice versa....AI to your British bulls, and then turn out Brahman bulls as clean up bulls. These are a few options that you can use if you aren't quite ready to go 100% F-1, but do want to slowly ease into breeding F-1s.

The decision to start raising Brahman cross F-1s is a good decision, especially if you are ranching anywhere in the southern U.S. or on the gulf coast. BRC specializes in serving this clientele.



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If you would like to learn more about how to start an F-1 program, or how to convert all or a portion of your existing herd into an F-1 producing herd, we are happy to setup a free consultation with you.

You can contact Keaton Dodd at [keaton@brcutrer.com](mailto:keaton@brcutrer.com) for more information on F-1 program consulting.