

The

# BEEFMASTER COWMAN®

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## Expanding Markets

**International Beefmaster  
demand increases**



**Boost Selection  
with Indices**

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# American Breed Goes International



## Beefmaster markets continue to expand as demand increases

by Jeralyn Novak

The international marketing of the Beefmaster breed is a high priority to Beefmaster Breeders United. We continue to work daily to expand Beefmaster markets and open new markets around the globe. We work with the U.S. Livestock Genetics Export Inc. (USLGE) to match international producers with sources in the United States that offer superior Beefmaster genetics with superior credentials. Most of our Beefmaster sales offer online bidding through *DVAuction.com*, which is a great resource for international breeders to purchase United States Beefmaster genetics. For more information on the BBU International Program, please contact Jon Garza at [jgarza@beefmasters.org](mailto:jgarza@beefmasters.org) or (512) 517-5163.

Beefmasters have excelled across most regions of the United States and is the leading breed of choice for commercial cattlemen in Mexico, South Africa, Thailand, Panama, Colombia, and several other Latin American regions. With global demand for higher-quality beef growing geometrically, Beefmasters provide the perfect breed to cross on native cattle to improve production efficiency and carcass quality, while not sacrificing adaptability.

Currently worldwide there are nine Beefmaster associations including Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala,

Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, South Africa, Thailand and the United States. Beefmaster genetics can also be found in the countries of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Honduras, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Ireland/United Kingdom and Turkey.

Beefmasters are well known within the international beef industry for their successful adaptation in tropical climates. While this has proven true in Central America and Thailand, this unique breed succeeds in high altitude deserts, as well as in cold and wet environments. The Lasater Foundation herd was moved in 1948 to Matheson, Colo. – where it remains to this day. The Lasater Ranch is located on the Rocky Mountain plains, which is known for its high altitude, snow, extreme cold and meager grassland for foraging. Meteorological review has shown that Matheson has more extreme cold in winter, heat in summer, and coastal plains type conditions than the Republic of Poland. Beefmaster cattle also flourish in the deserts of South Africa, Botswana and Zambia. They thrive in the mountains of Colombia and Venezuela, as well as Montana, Oregon, New Mexico, Kentucky and Wisconsin.

Domestic and international cattlemen have noted substantial economic gains from using

Beefmasters to provide an average increase of 30 kilograms or more at weaning when compared with other breeds. They excel post-weaning as well, with faster weight gains, excellent feed conversion and carcass yields around 64 percent. Land grant universities in Texas, Florida and Oklahoma are conducting research projects to evaluate carcass quality and feed efficiency through utilizing Beefmaster for crossbreeding on popular breeds such as Angus, Charolais, Hereford, Simmental, Limousin and even some dairy breeds. The Noble Research Institute is also working with Beefmaster Breeders United to conduct economic research on grass-fed, and grain-fed carcass merit. Their research points to the heterosis gains showing “an extra calf” when weaning weights produce 50 to 75 extra kilograms per calf born.

In a time when sustainability is becoming increasingly critical, Beefmasters have repeatedly demonstrated that they are highly efficient converters of both forage and feeds into lean, tender, high-quality beef. A recent study at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Meat Animal Research Center (MARC) demonstrated Beefmaster’s dominance when compared to 18 of the most widely used beef breeds in the United States. In 2017, research by University of Bologna

Animal Science Department on the impact that Beefmasters offer Italy resulted in a national award-winning thesis proving that Beefmasters provide the highest heterosis of any bovine breed worldwide. Other such composite breeds have been successful for short-term results, but the retained heterosis produced through crossbreeding with Beefmasters is strong and will generate long-term benefits. Performance studies within this research for the breeder near Rome confirmed the low birth weight with fast growing weight gains on purebreds. Recent dairy research with Beefmaster semen on various dairy breeds has also been reassuring for high fertility, hardiness and calving ease.

Beefmaster is an American beef breed that improves beef quality and production efficiency when crossed with any other cattle breed for commercial beef production, not only in the United States, but throughout the world. This American breed is now developing new purebred herds in United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Germany, Poland and Austria. Other areas of Europe/Asia, such as Turkey and Russia, are considering projects to gain these unique advantages provided by Beefmaster genetics. The breed has rapidly grown around the world and has become known as the prime maternal cow for serious commercial cattlemen that appreciate their production excellence, particularly in harsh desert or tropical environments.

The breed began expanding into Europe around 2014, with importation of EU qualified embryos for native surrogate dams. Beefmasters is recognized by various European Agricultural Ministries and with the International Committee for Animal Recording (ICAR), based in Rome. A European breed association has been formed in Italy with breeders from across Europe using imported embryos for initial herd development. Mature European Beefmaster bulls are now in collection for commercial use and expansion of the breed across Europe and North Africa. Recent testing of Beefmaster semen for use in crossed dairy beef in Italy has confirmed strong fertility for AI, calving ease, rapid weight gains, disease tolerance, evident muscle gains, and easy disposition.

Most of the international growth for the Beefmaster breed has been accomplished with a partnership with U.S. Livestock Genetics Export Inc. (USLGE). USLGE supported BBU in gaining Emerging Markets Project funding of \$145,000 in 2009. The program ran from 2009 to 2012 to introduce this American breed to beef



*Panama breeders enjoy a visit to Wallen Prairie Ranch, Lockwood, Mo.*

producers in Thailand. Education to explain Beefmaster benefits was the first step. Missions for breeders from the United States to Thai regional cattle shows for local and ag university seminars were conducted and a series of educational articles were developed and published in various journals from 2010 to 2011. Reverse missions were developed for key Thai breeders and publishers to visit U.S. cattle shows and conduct ranch tours to BBU breeders across Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas and Colorado.

Initial health restrictions for frozen genetics were a restrictive obstacle and extended the time for the Thai Department of Livestock Development (DLD) to approve our first semen shipment for import permitting. USLGE worked with BBU for a workshop at Texas A&M University that allowed USDA and U.S. animal health officials to work with DLD. This led to acceptance of Certified Semen Services (CSS) credentials and streamlined the protocols for testing and export. The work on protocols also affected later live animal export discussions.

The initial semen tank shipped included about 3,200 semen straws from several leading BBU member

bulls. Of that amount, 1,000 straws were donated by 10 BBU breeders. Two members agreed to recover the cost of tank and shipping by selling the additional 2,200 straws. DLD assisted in distributing the donated semen to farmers in all provinces of Thailand. The first Beefmaster crossed calf was born in Thailand in December 2010. As the initial calves matured over the next two to three years to deliver progeny for feeding and harvest, the demand outpaced supply.

Some breeders distributed the semen over the three years, so the returns began around 2015-2016 when the mature calves started to be harvested. Breed demand strengthened during that period with live cattle coming into demand and live animal exports becoming the norm for the more influential breeders in the years to follow. Thai breeders started importing live animals in 2015. Most of the live animals were show animals from major cattle shows in USA. As the cattle adapted well in Thailand, the shipments grew from a couple of large pallets of six to eight head to mature bulls, pairs, bred and open heifers in packages of 100 or more per shipment.

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*Turkish cattlemen visit the Texas A&M Beefmaster herd on a reverse trade mission.*

**PURPOSEFUL PERFORMANCE**

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\$3,200 more. This value could be even more if artificial insemination was used and more steer calves from Bull X were produced each year.

An index is another tool that producers can use to make informed breeding decisions that will help return the most profit to the operation. It is important to remember when using an index that a producer should have a production system in mind and then choose the appropriate index. Selection on an index is more efficient than single trait selection or setting culling levels for multiple traits because it is economically weighted for that production system.

\$M is the Beefmaster maternal index that is designed for a maternal system where replacement females will be kept and used in production. \$T is designed as a terminal index to be used when all calves will be sold for harvest. There has been a great amount of research put into both of these indices and the economic values assigned to each trait. They are a great tool that can and should be used to help eliminate single trait selection. Remember to use each index for its intended purpose. ★

**AMERICAN BREED INTERNATIONAL**

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In 2020, farmers and DLD imported over 100 live animals and 10,000 units of semen. Top genomic seedstock are now in demand with export and cargo value exceeding \$1 million for livestock and \$250,000 for frozen genetics (semen and embryos) since 2009. 2020 exports were up to \$920,450 and year to date 2021 reported sales from since producers total over \$1.7 million and growing.

None of this could be possible without the funding provided by Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) and cooperation between USLGE and BBU. This FAS funded project has been used as a model for projects in other countries. FAS funding allowed BBU to develop a new method of breed introduction that is improving exports to other countries by BBU.

Beefmasters has enjoyed a rapidly

growing international footprint, with established associations in nine countries worldwide. These innovative cattlemen have seen the tremendous strengths Beefmasters bring to their own genetic improvement programs. For more information about what Beefmasters can do for your operation and marketing your cattle internationally, please visit us at [www.beefmasters.org/international](http://www.beefmasters.org/international). ★



Beefmaster breeders from Costa Rica donated artwork by a renown artist in Costa Rica that was auctioned off at the 2021 BBU convention. Proceeds were donated to the Junior Beefmaster Breeders Association and to benefit the BBU International Program.

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