

BENEFITS OF INFUSING **ANGUS GENETICS INTO NORTHERN AUSTRALIAN BEEF HERDS**

Angus Australia has surveyed producers in northern Australia to increase the understanding of the benefits of infusing Angus genetics into their beef herds.

This research, involved interviews with over 60 commercial or seedstock producers either running or supplying bulls into northern Australia.

Responses from producers interviewed in this research confirm that using Angus genetics in northern beef herds can have many benefits, and that Angus bulls can be run successfully in most areas of northern Australia if some simple management practices are adopted.

The main benefits of incorporating Angus genetics into northern Australian beef herds included improved marketability of stock, hybrid vigour, enhanced female fertility and the introduction of polledness.

Additional benefits were also obtained from the utilisation of complementary attributes with other breeds when Angus were included in structured cross breeding programs.

The extent to which the benefits from the infusion of Angus were achieved was impacted by the management of bulls prior to and after relocation to the north, as well as the female replacement policy used in these herds.

Market Flexibility

Northern producers have reported that the incorporation of Angus genetics has broadened the market options for their stock and provided greater access to processor premiums available for cattle meeting MSA specifications.

The adoption of MSA grading by the major meat processors in Queensland and some specific markets requiring a minimum *Bos taurus* content was cited as a key driver for the increased use of Angus genetics.

The growth in demand for Angus branded product has also been a significant factor driving premiums for Angus cattle.

Premiums of up to 40 cents/kg live weight or more have been cited for Angus or Angus cross steers over animals with no Angus content.

Enhanced Fertility

Increases in calving rates were widely reported by northern producers following the incorporation of Angus genetics into their breeding herds. Reduced age at puberty allowed heifers to conceive earlier and calve down at a younger age when the seasonal conditions were favourable. In addition, shorter lactation anoestrus periods were reported in the crossbred cow herd, resulting in shorter calving intervals and heavier weaners at mustering.

Hybrid Vigour

Incorporating Angus genetics resulted in benefits through hybrid vigour among crossbred calves and replacement females, as well as combining positive attributes of both *Bos taurus* and *Bos indicus* genetics.

It was reported that the expression of hybrid vigour decreased the age at which progeny are finished. This enhanced the chances of obtaining premiums associated with MSA grading by ensuring that bullocks were above 500 kilograms live weight with milk or 2 teeth.

Crossbred females with Angus content were reported as being more fertile and having superior milk production compared to *Bos indicus* derived females.





Polledness

One of the benefits associated with the use of Angus bulls is that the majority of their progeny will be polled. While the polled gene is dominant, the African horn gene and scur genes common in *Bos indicus* breeds are inherited separately. Consequently, it may take several generations of breeding with polled bulls to achieve a fully polled herd.

Northern producers reported that breeding polled cattle was highly desirable as it eliminated stress and weight losses associated with dehorning, reduced the risk of work place injury and reduced bruising of cattle during yarding and transportation.

Research Confirms Benefits

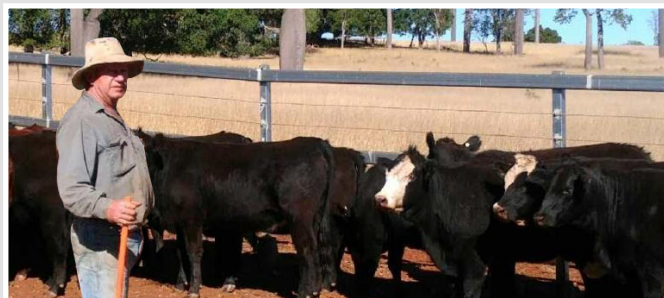
The Beef Co-operative Research Centre (Beef CRC) conducted a large crossbreeding trial in central Queensland where bulls from eight breeds were joined to Brahman cows. Calves were grown out on grass and in feedlots for different market endpoints.

The results showed that Angus cross calves were lightest at birth and had similar growth performance and carcass weights to European crosses. They were easier to finish, with good muscling, more marbling, better tenderness and highest MSA meat quality scores.

GEOFFREY HARTWIG

Eidsvold & Tambo QLD

'Angus bulls cross exceptionally well with all other breeds, and their durability and muscling is great. The hybrid vigour with Angus come through very quickly, and their marbling is also very attractive.'



LEE MCNICHOLL

Dulacca QLD

'One of the reasons I use Angus bulls are because Angus breeders were early in the adoption of the use of EBVS, making selection decisions easier.'

Using Angus genetics in our herd improves our MSA index and the eating quality of the beef at the end. Over the years Angus cattle have become much more productive, with higher growth rates, improved carcass yields and marbling potential and the emphasis placed on fertility is very important, overall they are very functional and productive cattle.'



FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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