

# SIMBRAH BEEF BRIEFS

## Development of the Simbrah Breed

What began as little more than an idea in the late 1960's on the part of a few cattlemen has now emerged as a viable beef breed in the United States. The concept of combining two of the most populous breeds of cattle in the world, Brahman, which ranks number one in the numbers, and Simmental, which ranks number two, resulted in the development of a breed known as Simbrah. Although a number of American beef breeds have been developed using Brahman blood including the Santa Gertrudis, Brangus and Beefmaster, the success of the Simbrah breed has been startling.

Using two distinctly different breeds of cattle utilizes the strengths of both breeds and because of the genetically divergent background, maximizes hybrid vigor. Combining the strengths of the Brahman breed, which include longevity, heat tolerance, disease and insect resistance, durability, grazing ability and calving ease with excellent traits from the Simmental, such as fertility, milking ability, rapid growth and early sexual maturity gives an excellent opportunity to produce a superior breed. The fact that the combination works and is, in fact, highly advantageous is illustrated by the rapid rise in popularity and acceptance of the Simbrah cattle in the beef cattle industry.

Although the experimentation of combining Simmental and Brahman began on the part of the breeders in the late 1960's, the actual first registration of a Simbrah animal occurred in 1977. Simbrah registration was approved by the two categories of Simbrah admitted to the registry. A purebred animal consists of 5/8 Simmental and 3/8 Brahman breeding. Any other combination with a minimum of 1/8 Simmental and 1/8 Brahman with as much as 3/8 of one or more other breeds can be recorded as a percentage Simbrah.



### The basic requirements for Simbrah cattle are as follows:

#### 1. Every Simbrah animal must contain

- minimum of 1/8 Simmental
- minimum of 1/8 Brahman
- maximum of 3/8 combination of other breeds

*Examples of acceptable combinations could range from: 3/8 SM-1/4 BR-3/8 (maximum portion of other breeds allowed) to 3/4 SM 1/8 BR (maximum portion of Simmental allowed) to 1/8 SM - 7/8 BM (min. Simmental allowed).*

#### 2. The following criteria must be met to qualify as a purebred Simbrah:

- Simmental = 5/8
- Brahman = 3/8
- Both parents must be ASA registered membership of the American Simmental Association in 1977, with breeders registering 700 animals the first year of existence. The next year an additional 1,100 were registered and added to the herdbook, and in the first five years of growth, over 3,000 animals were being registered, and the herdbook approached 10,000 animals.

#### 3. Additional requirements:

- Sire of any Simbrah must be registered with ASA under one of three categories:
  - Non-Simmental — registered as a Foundation Brahman. Certificate of registration from recognized breed registry is required.  
*Examples:* 100% Brahman bull or Brangus bull.
  - Simmental — registered as either a percentage or purebred Simmental bull.
  - Simbrah — registered as either a purebred (5/8 SM 3/8 BR) or percentage Simbrah.
- For determining the percent Simmental in any Simbrah animal, only the amount contributed from ASA-registered parents will be considered.  
*For example:* If a registered 3/4 SM 1/4 XX bull is crossed with a 1/2 SM 1/2 BR registered cow, the progeny will be recognized as 5/8 SM 1/4 BR 1/8 XX. If that same registered 3/4 SM 1/4 XX bull is crossed with an unregistered 1/2 SM 1/2 BR commercial cow, the progeny will be recognized as 3/8 SM 1/4 BR 3/8 XX because the dam is not registered.

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- c. A dam does not necessarily have to be registered with ASA to be able to register her progeny as Simbrah (except for the limitation outlined in b). Progeny from Foundation Brahman females unregistered with ASA are eligible for Simbrah certificates in certain cases.

*Examples:*

1. A registered purebred Simmental bull bred to a 100% Brahman cow (not registered) results in a 1/2 SM 1/2 BR progeny that can be registered as a Simbrah.
  2. A registered 3/4 SM 1/4 XX bull bred to a 1/2 BR 1/2 XX unregistered cow will result in a 3/8 SM 1/4 BR 3/8 XX offspring that can be registered as a Simbrah.
- d. The Simbrah herdbook is maintained within the Simmental records and all procedures and performance requirements applying to Simmental also apply to Simbrah cattle.

By allowing a wide range of crosses, from 1/8 to 3/4 Simmental and 1/8 to 7/8 Brahman, breeders can select for the optimum combination that is best suited for their own herd. They can select for percentages that will perform in the climatic conditions and satisfy market trends in their area.

By allowing up to 3/8 of other breeds in Simbrah cattle, breeders can also introduce other valuable genetics into their herds, such as the polled trait. In the purebred Simbrah, the 5/8 and 3/8 is an approximation allowing for a total of 1/16 outside blood which is then dropped by the computer and automatically rounded off to a 5/8 - 3/8, where possible.

Affiliation with the Simmental Association has offered Simbrah breeders many advantages over the other Brahman-based American breeds. This includes required collection and reporting of performance data for every

animal that enters the herdbook. Using this information, breeders are then provided with performance pedigrees, estimated breeding values, within-herd summaries, and cow productivity reports. Performance data collected includes birth weight and calving-ease scores as well as the required weaning and yearling weights for bulls to be registered and weaning weights for females to be registered. This strong emphasis on performance will only enhance the role of Simbrah cattle as an American cattle breed in the future.

Although the initial development of the Simbrah breed occurred predominantly in the Southern part of the United States, with a high percentage of initial Simbrah cattle being bred in Texas, the growth of the breed throughout the United States has continued. Notably, a dramatic increase in Simbrah numbers has occurred in the northwestern part of the United States. A northern movement of the Simbrah breed into the states in the central part and the eastern part of the United States has occurred in recent years. The acceptance of the Simbrah breed throughout the cattle industry in the United States continues to be more evident every year. Commercial producers are utilizing Simbrah breeds in large numbers and feedlot operators like the feed conversion, rate of gain, and carcass results they've been getting from the Simbrah and Simbrah-cross cattle.

Overall, the growth of the Simbrah breed has been solid, steady and well planned. The future appears to be very promising with unlimited potential. Further details about Simbrah can be obtained from ASA, which keeps the herdbook and provides the support and membership services to this breed along with Simmental cattle.

