

Schroeder-Manatee Ranch: No Regrets in Using Crossbred Bulls

Cliff W. Coddington

Cattle Manager

Schroeder-Manatee Ranch

Bradenton, Florida

In the mid 80's, Schroeder-Manatee Ranch started to manage a herd of cattle that consisted of every breed that you could imagine (Angus, Brangus, Hereford, Braford, Brahman, and Charolais). We soon found out that, if we were ever going to have any consistency in quality and color, we needed to change our program.

Schroeder-Manatee Ranch chose Brangus as the breed that would work for us. We believe that they will, in time, give us uniformity in herd quality, color, and give us a marketable black-hided feeder steer. As we maintain this uniformity, it will also give us an open market for quality replacement heifers.

I feel that no matter what breed fits your environment, there is more variation in a breed rather than between breeds, so you will have to be very selective in buying your bulls.

Since we have started the above program, we have converted our bull power to all Brangus

3/8-5/8 bulls. This has not been an easy chore because of the way we were doing it. We were using all half brothers from two sire groups. It is difficult to find ten half brothers from the same seedstock producer. Using this measure increases your management when it comes to buying bulls, and also increases your management due to putting sire groups with specific herds.

We have increased weaning weights by 15 pounds in a 30-day shorter growing period, uniformed our cow herd in color and genetics, and have uniformed our feeder steers in quality and color by using crossbred bulls.

We at Schroeder-Manatee Ranch have no regrets of using crossbred bulls. As commercial cattle producers, we will have to maintain uniformity in our product if we are going to survive in this changing world.