

## In the Genes

By SPGCA President  
Teddy Gentry

Flushing cows, except under certain circumstances which we will discuss later, is not a good or profitable thing for building a maternal cow herd.



The total value of the maternal breed is in the profit traits fertility and longevity. Flushing unproven cows puts unpredictable genetics back in the breed. Once a cow has been given shots and flushed she will never be the same genetically.

Flushing a young cow makes no sense at all, regardless of how good she appears to be. She may have come up open the following year and that infertility characteristic might not show up for years down the road. Before a cow is considered to be flushed she needs to have had a perfect calving record for at least 10 to 12 years.

Flushing is a very expensive way of getting calves and the process can end up costing \$1,500 to \$2,000 by the time you get a weaned calf. Unless you are involved in a purebred clique (you buy my high-priced one – I buy your high-priced one) the odds of making money on a whole flush are not in your favor.

I believe in making heavy use of bulls that are out of the cows that never miss and meet our target weight of 900 to 1,100 pounds. Those cows should also have no physical faults, good teat size and udder suspension, sound feet and legs, no history of pink eye, prolapse or major sickness of any kind.

Stacking these cows in our pedigrees is the very best way of building a profitable maternal breed. A single bull out of a cow you like can sire literally thousands of calves in a lifetime. Even if you AI to the best bulls in the breed the cost is minimal compared to flushing.

The passing of time is the only thing that proves a cow is great.

## Field Day

The fourth annual South Poll Grass Cattle Association annual meeting and field day will be held on Friday and Saturday, June 22 and 23, at Voss Land & Cattle Co. in Linn, Missouri. Hosts Ralph and Jerry Voss are charter board members of the association.

The event will feature an open forum on farm management practices and other demonstrations on Friday afternoon with the seed stock auction, a Greg Judy pasture walk, silent auction, trade show and other demonstrations and tours on Saturday. Lunch will be provided on Saturday.

Watch future newsletters for more information.

## Whisonants host October SPGCA board meeting

In the summer of 2005 Yvonne and I set out to purchase some property in Cullman County just 20 miles north of where we were living. We found a 100 acre plot and had intentions of purchasing it but before we could decide someone bought it.

There was a large farm just three miles from our home that Yvonne had admired and dreamed of for years, knowing in reality that the owners would never consider selling or that we would not be able to afford it. Out of the blue one day she asked me if I would call the owner and see if he would be interested in selling. Very reluctantly I agreed. The farm belonged to Tom and Judy Merritt. Mr. Merritt told me the farm had belonged to his father since 1956 and he inherited it after his father's death.

He also said he had no intentions of selling but would love to show us the farm. We wound up staying six hours and of course fell in love. Once again we asked him if he would sell and because of health issues and the fact that his wife didn't want to live in the country

he called us and said he would sell. Of course we were not sure we could afford it. We had a set amount of money that we would offer and when all was said and done that amount was exactly the asking price. Within three weeks we were the proud owners of the Merritt Farm. We decided to name it after Tom and are so glad we did because he passed away a year later of congestive heart failure.

We had to take everything that was on the farm which included 17 Limousin cows. I had no

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Board members looking at the Whisonant cow herd during the board meeting at their home on Oct. 8



Yvonne and Randy Whisonant.

### VISIT THE SOUTH POLL BOOTH AT THE ACRES USA CONFERENCE

If you're going to be at the Acres USA Conference on Dec. 8, 9 and 10 in Columbus, Ohio, make a point of visiting the South Poll Grass Cattle Association booth at the trade show.

Association President Teddy Gentry and Vice President Greg Judy will be working the booth along with other members of the association. Judy will be a featured speaker at the conference and is also doing a workshop on the principles of mob grazing.

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previous experience with raising cows so I did an internet search and came across Bent Tree Farms. I met with Dave Roberts at the farm and was impressed with the South Poll cows I saw. I bought five bred heifers and knowing I needed a bull spotted RH 60. I was told he wasn't for sale. A few weeks later I was the proud owner of RH 60. I bred my Limousin cows to RH 60 and was impressed with the outcome. I started selling off my cows until I had nothing but South Polls. I bought 10 more bred heifers from Holiday Ranch and then two more from Bent Tree.

After seeing the difference between Limousin and the South Polls and by cutting my hay consumption by 30%, I knew I had made the right decision to breed South Polls exclusively.

A big bonus in having the cows is the grass-fed beef that they produce.

The taste and texture is so far superior to anything that you buy in the grocery store.

My long-term goal is to retire from the general contracting and heavy industrial business and live out the rest of my days raising and selling South Poll cattle. What a life!!



Teddy Gentry and Randy Whisonant at the board meeting.



John Eldridge works on financial reports.



South Poll cattle at Merritt Farm.

## NOTES FROM THE OCT. BOARD MEETING

The Oct. 8 SPGCA meeting was held in Warrior, Alabama at the home of Randy and Yvonne Whisonant.

At that meeting the board:

- \* Agreed to have a booth at the Acres USA Conference in Columbus, Ohio on Dec. 8, 9 and 10.
- \* Agreed to leave registration rates at the \$10 for animals under one year of age or \$15 for animals over a year and the \$8/\$12 transfer rate until Dec. 31, 2011. On Jan. 1, 2012 the rate will go to \$15 and \$20 respectively to register and to \$10 to transfer an animal under one year of age and \$15 to transfer one over a year of age. Send registrations to the South Poll Grass Cattle Association, P.O. Box 2638, Chattanooga, TN 37409.
- \* Agreed that non-members of the association could now register and transfer animals at double the rate of a member. Non-members could not previously register or transfer cattle.
- \* Voted that no animals that are the result of flushing after Oct. 8, 2011 can be registered.
- \* Discussed having a couple of pens of heifers at the Houston Livestock Show in March.
- \* Made plans for the 2012 field day which will be held in Linn, Missouri, on June 22 and 23, 2012. Detailed plans will be announced in future newsletters.
- \* Set the next board meeting for Feb. 18 at the home of Ralph and Jerry Voss in Linn, Mo.



Board members look over reports prior to the board meeting.