

breeders by producing cattle that were more adaptable and efficient for their environment.

I had never seen a South Poll until that day. For those of you who do not know, the South Poll is a composite breed that is 1/4 Hereford, 1/4 Angus, 1/4 Barzona, and 1/4 Senepol. No they didn't originate in the Garden of Eden, nor did any other breed. I had heard about Barzonas and Senepols, but had never seen any until that day in 1998. They add a lot to the South Poll breed. The Barzonas are very hardy, heat tolerant, have good udders and live a long time. One of the old Barzona cows a lot of the South Polls go back to lived to be 26. The South Poll breed is extremely heat tolerant, milk well, put a good shape in a rib eye, and do extremely well in the hot summer months.

I know about the Hereford and Angus. Teddy explained he used them in the mix, because the Herefords were very docile and had great foraging ability and could adapt about anywhere. The Angus were noted for their carcass traits and mothering ability.

What I like about the South Poll breed, is that combing these four other breeds of cattle created a cow that is very balanced; is efficient on grass, very fertile; produces a very nice tender carcass; and is very problem free. Problem free might be the most important point in my opinion. Compared to other cattle I've been around, they have fewer calving problems, less pink-eye, fewer prolapses, fewer fertility problems, more calf vigor and fewer fly problems. If you don't think so, run them with another breed, and count the flies on each animal on a hot humid day. These are all economic traits that can't always be measured by EPDs.

I need to start over a little bit. I took the job at Bent Tree back in 1998. I was excited when I got to calve out the first set of full blood South Poll heifers I had been around. They all calved unassisted; the calves got up and nursed and were running around in no time.

The South Poll breed started out from a pretty humble



Dave Roberts is shown here with some recently-weaned South Poll heifers.

beginning; from an idea to reality. In a few short years South Poll bred calves have spread from Ft. Payne, Ala., to 20 some states and three South American countries.

I get questions all the time about South Polls.

1. What about their carcass traits?

Answer: The last load of steers Bent Tree fed out graded 96% choice and prime

2. What about gain?

Answer: A pot load of South Poll steers in a feedlot situation gained 4.89 lbs/day, setting a record for the feeder who feeds thousands per year. In a grazing situation a grazer reported a pot load of South Poll steers out performed any cattle he had dealt with.

3. What about fertility?

Answer: Ask someone like Bill Bond in Texas. The heifers he kept for replacements all settled, and of the heifers he sold, all but one settled first service A.I.

As a side note, I've never known of a grass-raised South Poll bull to not be fertile. If I'm wrong please let me know

4. What about their docility?

Answer: Why not ask my old friend and neighbor Jon Bell from Plymouth, Ill. I've been dealing with Jon for more years than I like to count. He's been buying bulls from Bent Tree since I've been here. He told me he

wished he'd had South Poll bulls 25 years ago; he was finally producing cattle that were easy to handle.

5. What about adaptability?

Answer: South Polls were bred to be the Southern Mama Cow, but have thrived and survived from Florida to Minnesota and from the Car-

olinas to California. So far, none in Alaska.

In summary one of the most important things about the South Poll breed is the people who have become involved as breeders. They have become great friends and are true stewards of their land, grass and cattle.

**2nd Annual
South Poll Grass Cattle Association
Meeting & Field Day
May 8, 2010**

**Hosted by Tom & Toyah McGrady,
Montgomery, Texas**

On The Farm – On Grass

Registration \$50 - \$75 after April 15

**Guest Speakers
Ian Mitchell Innes • Greg Judy
Jim Sanders, Ph. D.**

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