



# SOUTH POLL NEWSLETTER

Summer 2008

## Gentry shares secret to successful cow/calf operation

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"The further we go into this, the more convinced I am that the small, highly productive, low maintenance, grass-fed cow is the secret to the cow-calf industry," said South Poll innovator Teddy Gentry at the first meeting of what he ultimately intends to be a national South Poll association.

South Poll breeders from

seven states attended the meeting hosted by Gentry and his wife, Linda, at their Bent Tree Farms in Fort Payne, Alabama, on May 15 and heard Gentry say, "I want to organize this group so that we're the envy of other associations. We want to be the pride and joy of the everyday cattleman, the average cow-calf guy. We want to put a page on our website that talks about every one of you guys' farms."

Gentry says that "if a breeder has a good herd of South Poll mama cows, you have all the options in the world" and stresses that the good genetics in the breed come through the mama cows, enough so that any type bull could be used to produce marketable calves.

Gentry said a local breeder had used a herd of South Poll mama cows and bred them to a bull that was about 20 percent Chianina and 80 percent Angus. "At about a year old those calves weighed about 1200 pounds and he sent them off to

be slaughtered and smiled all the way to the bank."

But Gentry cautioned breeders that he felt the biggest market in the breed for the next 10 to 15 years would be in the production of South Poll females. "I think if you breed your South Poll cows to South Poll bulls your top-end females will be worth a premium of 50 to 100 percent over commercial prices. These cows are gentle, slick haired, produce a good piece of meat on grass and fit in with our humidity and heat. The females are driving this industry. The steers are a by-product of our maternal program. We have to stick with the mama cows. We can't put our emphasis on the steers," he told breeders.

"I want to maximize my profitability per acre on the grass that I've got. These cows work for me, I don't work for them," Gentry says and contends that the data he has compiled shows that the small 1,000 to 1,050 pound cow that is shaped right will work best for the cattleman. "There's a big difference in 1,000 pound cows, too. You can't have a frame 5 cow that looks like a razor blade. I'm talking about a 2 to 2-1/2 frame cow that is shaped like a cow should be."

"Even if you are selling your animals to a local sale barn, the small, highly productive cow is gonna be your ticket. For every 100 pounds of body weight on a cow above 1,000 pounds, only 20 percent

of that amount is shown in gain on that cow's calf. In other words, you can only gain 20 pounds on the calf for every 100 pounds of extra body weight on the cow," Gentry told the group.

"Sure, weaning that 600 pound calf off a 1,500 pound cow is great, but what is that extra 500 pounds of body weight on the cow going to cost you? We all know that a cow will eat the same amount as their body weight every thirty days. So every four months that cow has to eat a ton of feed to keep that extra 500 pounds. The cost of that ton of feed will be a lot higher than what you got off the few extra pounds on the calf," Gentry said.

"I don't think I'm real good at merchandising, but I think if we present people with the facts and let them come look at our cattle, that's all we have to do to sell these South Polls. The future of the cattle business goes back to our production costs and we've got it all right here," Gentry told breeders.

"It's a whole new way of thinking, but I've been this way for the last 15 years and I get more convinced I'm right every year. It's the flexibility of the animal to adapt to a wide range of management practices," he explained to the breeders.

Gentry says he started working on the South Poll



Gentry shown with some of his South Poll cattle.

South Poll Grass Cattle Association

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## In Our Next Issue...

We will have an article by Teddy Gentry and Greg Judy will tell us about his recent experiences at a Utah cattle ranch. We will also have an update on the progress on bylaws and guidelines for our organization.

**Want To  
Buy or Sell  
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Cattle?**  
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Long-time Bent Tree herdsman Dave Roberts looks at BO442, a moderate-sized cow that is Teddy's favorite. Earlier this year she weaned off a bull calf that weighed 796 pounds.

If you have information you would like to share in upcoming issues of the newsletter, please submit information to or contact:

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This is what Teddy considers the ideal cow. BO442 weighs 1075 pounds and at 47 inches in height, has a frame score of 2 1/2. She had her first calf in 2002 as a two-year-old and has had an outstanding calf each year since. She has given birth to seven calves. Three bull calves are presently being used as herd sires.



# Chef Clayton wows crowd with gourmet South Poll luncheon

Chef Clayton Sherrod, a friend of Teddy Gentry's for many years, cooked and served a gourmet luncheon for the group after the organizational meeting.

Teddy says that Chef Clayton is a self-made man who started working as an assistant greensman at a Birmingham country club many years ago. He said that one day help was needed in the kitchen and that Clayton was moved there for the day. He did so well there that he stayed in that area and is now the main chef for the country club.

Chef Clayton is very active in the Junior Diabetes Association and trades his cooking services to Teddy in return for "selling" a day with Teddy at his association's fundraiser auction. Teddy said that last year he was sold for \$20,000 for a day with two couples and that this year the day with him brought \$44,000 for 20 people to visit the farm and have dinner with the Gentrys. Teddy says the day is great fun and that he enjoys being able to help Chef Clayton and his diabetes group.

Chef Clayton and his staff cooked South Poll steak, fresh vegetables which included a casserole of summer

squash with Italian Vodka sauce that is sold in the Bent Tree Farms country store. We were also treated to a wonderful salad with homemade Blueberry Vinaigrette dressing, and to top off the heavenly lunch, Chef Clayton served a Golden Pear Tart with Creme Fraiche.

Everyone loved the lunch and many attendees said this was the best meal they had ever eaten.

Pretty good for a lunch at a cattle farm!!!!

Chef Clayton was kind enough to share some of his recipes with us.

## Golden Pear Tart with Crème Fraiche

### Crust:

- 1 C Butter
- 2/3 C Sugar
- 1 Tsp. Vanilla
- 1 1/2 C Flour
- 1 C Walnuts, Chopped

Cream butter and sugar. Add remaining ingredients and press into a 9x13 pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes and cool.

### Filling:

- 16 oz Cream Cheese
- 2 Eggs
- 1/2 C Sugar
- 1 Tsp. Vanilla

Combine thoroughly and pour over cooled crust.

### Topping:

- 1 large can pears, sliced
- 2 Tsp. Cinnamon
- 2 Tsp. Sugar

Mix cinnamon and sugar together. Arrange pears on filling. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. Bake at 375 degrees for 25 minutes. Cool & Refrigerate.

## Blueberry Vinaigrette

### Ingredients:

- 1/4 C Balsamic Vinegar
- 1/2 C Salad Oil
- 1 T Water
- 1/2 T Salt
- 1 T chopped Fresh Sweet Basil
- 1 T Italian Seasoning
- 1/2 T Granulated Garlic
- 1 1/2 T Honey
- 2 T Pureed Fresh Blueberries
- Salt & Peper to taste

### Method:

Mix all of the ingredients together, store in a tightly closed container.

## Steak Marinade

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup Olive Oil
- 1/8 cup Soy Sauce
- 2 T Season Salt
- 1 T Paprika
- 1 T Black Pepper
- 1 T Oregano
- 1 T Basil
- 1 T Thyme
- 1 T Granulated Garlic
- 1/4 T Fresh Chopped Garlic
- 1 T Rosemary

### Method:

Mix all of the ingredients and marinate steaks as desired.



Chef Clayton Sherrod and Teddy Gentry pose with some of the fabulous food prepared for the luncheon by Chef Clayton.



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breed in 1989 and combined the best genetic traits he could find in the Trask Hereford herd, the Angus, Senepol and Barzona breeds to form his South Poll breed.

Gentry says the Hereford breed provided the great capacity and heart girth for the cows and the extreme gentleness for the South Poll breed. He credits the Barzona influence for giving the breed its adaptability and hardiness. "They'll eat plants that other cows won't eat and the Senepols are about the same," he said.

Gentry suggested that each breeder in the new association use integrity in what he passes on to other breeders. "If you ever have to pull a calf, we don't want that cow in our program. If a cow has a prolapse or an udder problem, we don't want them. We need to cull them out. These are the type things we need in our bylaws," he said.

"If we gave each cow a star for every year they calved unassisted that would be a real asset to breeders when looking at a cow's pedigree, instead of looking at EPDs. We are all about good reproductive traits and that's what the star system would show. If you have a 15-star cow for the allotted 17 years of her life, we'd all know that was a good cow," Gentry said.

South Poll breeder Tom McGrady of Texas echoed Gentry's sentiments in referring to a "code of ethics" among the association's forming breeders. "There should be general guidelines on how we should raise cattle. It's about building an image of what a perfect cow

should be and our mission statement should bring other people into our group that agree with that goal," the Texan said.

Gentry closed out the meeting by saying his personal goal was to produce "the most tender-eating meat per acre off of my own environment, not per



Breeders enjoy Chef Clayton's gourmet lunch.

individual cow, but for every pound of grass they eat. Until I go to my grave, I will still be on my soapbox preaching little cows," he said.

Gentry was elected president of the new association, Missouri breeder and high stock density grazing lecturer Greg Judy was chosen as vice-president and Gentry appointed Missouri breeder Jerry Voss and Tonya McGrady of Texas as secre-

tary and treasurer respectively.

Executive board members, in addition to officers of the organization, are McGrady, Kentucky veterinarian Steve Hampton, John Eldridge of Georgia, Ralph Voss of Missouri, J. A. Girgenti of Louisiana, Cliff White of Florida, Todd Thompson of Illinois and John Lyons of Alabama.

Bruce Shanks of Missouri and Lyons were appointed to start and maintain a Junior Membership program in the association.

The breeders were treated to a dinner Friday night at Gentry's ranch and then attended breakfast the next morning prior to the business meeting held in the Burt's Beef barn, which was named for Gentry's grandfather and is also the name of his grass-fed beef business. The group was also treated to a luncheon of South Poll steak prepared by Chef Clayton Sherrod of Birmingham. Many of the recipes for the food Chef Clayton prepared are in another story in this newsletter.

The second formation meeting of the association was held in Linn, Mo. at the home and farm of Ralph and Jerry Voss on July 11 and 12 where specifics of bylaws and guidelines for the association were discussed.

For more information about the South Poll breed or membership in the association contact Lisa Jeffrey at 256-845-6851



Gentry reading a letter from a South Poll breeder that could not attend the May 15 meeting.



Tom McGrady (back to the camera), Ralph Voss, Greg Judy and Teddy Gentry chat Friday evening prior to the dinner.



Teddy Gentry having lunch Saturday with his four grandchildren Anthony, Emma, Jessie and Lexi.