

LASATER BEEFMASTERS

"The Pedigree
is in the Name"

FOUNDATION HERD OF THE BEEFMASTER BREED

Dale Lasater or Aaron Berger

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The 6 Essentials

DISPOSITION
FERTILITY
WEIGHT
CONFORMATION
HARDINESS
MILK PRODUCTION

Fall 2002
NEWSLETTER

We select cattle to work for us, so we know they will work for you.

Lasater Beefmaster 53rd Annual Production Sale Report

78 Bulls Averaged \$2,242

The Lasater Beefmaster 53rd Annual Field Day and Production Sale was held September 10 and 11 at the Lasater Ranch near Matheson, Colorado. A good group of purebred Beefmaster breeders and commercial cattlemen were in attendance, with the majority of those being long-time customers and repeat buyers. The focus of the auction were the Lasater retired herd sires and two-year-old bulls developed on native forage. Thirty-six buyers from eleven states and Mexico purchased bulls and females.



A special thanks to the volume buyers at our annual production sale:

Rio Ranch, Florida; Myron Peterson, Nebraska; Martin Schulz, Texas;
7R Ranch, Colorado; Frank Migl, Texas; Violeta Ranch, Texas;
Fisher Ranch, Colorado; David C. Brown Beefmasters, Florida;

Also to:

Rancho Los Pintos, Gustavo Levy, Joe Vargas, Wylie Anderson,
John McGrew, Steve McFaul, Kent Mindeman, Tony Keilholz,
Long LF Beefmasters, Roy White, La Ventana Cattle Co., John Bazel,
Roy Ratliff, Larry Buster, Robert Newton, Doyle Altaffer, A.G. Halstead, Bradley
Ragland, Clint Deay, Cecil Post, Tim Wilson, Ron Freeman,
Scott Johnson, Ronnie Ranly, Jack Johnson, Milford Denetclaw,
Howard Froud, Rick Graff, Larry Payne and Paul Streich

We also appreciate those who participated in our sale or were represented there: Carl Hubble, Mark Blau, Gary Frenzel, Terry Frenzel, John Dressel, Fernando Pena, Terry Fry, Henry Luther, Jo Anne Mendiburu, Salt Creek Beefmasters, Donald Stout, Fred Schneider, Robert Latimer, Joel Franz, Gene Schwinge, Jimmy Fisher, Doyle Parker, and Charles Fite

The Relative Economic Value of Traits



The profit pyramid illustrates the relative economic importance or weight of the three listed traits - reproductive efficiency, growth and product (carcass) - on profitability. Several different ratings have been given to the overall value of each of these traits relative to one another. Traditionally, the traits were thought to have a ratio of 10:5:1. This means reproductive efficiency is twice as important as growth traits, which is five times as important as carcass traits. Several years ago, Mr. Bryan Melton at Iowa State did a reanalysis of these traits based on a value-based type marketing system. Based on these parameters, his analysis indicated that that ratio would be closer to 2:1:1. A more recent analysis by the Gelbvieh Association's Gelbvieh Alliance marketing program, based on 110,000 feedlot cattle that had gone through the program, indicated that the relative economic importance of these traits would be approximately 4:2:1.

The common fact that stands out from each analysis is that consistently **reproductive efficiency** was found to be the most important trait affecting **profitability**, followed by growth traits and ending with carcass traits. **This means as cow-calf producers, if we are not focused on cost effectively improving reproductive efficiency, we are overlooking one of the greatest opportunities to improve profitability to our operations.**

Unfortunately, many times it is often easier to focus on the more easily measured growth and carcass traits and overlook cost effective reproductive efficiency. **Lasater Beefmaster®** genetics have been selected for reproductive efficiency for over 50 years. Our selection program has strict reproductive standards that bulls and females must adhere to in a range environment with minimum inputs. Those bulls and females that don't meet the standards are removed. Only by setting standards high and continually applying pressure can we insure progress in selecting for those cattle that are reproductively efficient.

LONGEVITY: The Ultimate Measure of Genetic Balance

Certain of the six essential characteristics can easily be under-emphasized because they do not have readily accessible numbers as, for instance, weight does. For that reason, it is easy to over-emphasize weight in a selection program, and to not put sufficient emphasis on a trait such as hardiness.

On the female side, longevity is the best indicator we have of hardiness. Another word for hardiness might be adaptation, meaning adaptation to the natural environment in which an animal is expected to produce. Longevity is also the best means we have of measuring an animal's superiority in achieving that delicate balance between antagonistic traits such as milk production, weight and fertility.

In our herd, we have a reasonable number of 10 to 12-year-old cows that are still producing good calves on schedule. However, #486 from the Watt Casey herd is, at least in recent memory, in a league by herself: she had dropped 15 consecutive calves by her 16th birthday. She first conceived at 15 months, and then re-bred each year thereafter in a 30-day breeding season.

Even this remarkable production record is not the most interesting part of the #486 story. Rather the greatest interest is what we can learn in the details of that production history, details that perhaps teach us something about consistency and the balance necessary to excel in a multi-trait selection program.

A Day to Breed, A Weight to Wean

#486 conceived within a very narrow time frame: she dropped practically all of her first 15 calves between September 11 and September 24, the majority of those within a one-week range. That means she conceived very close to the same day each year.

Just as remarkable is the incredible consistency of the weaning weights of her 8 male offspring (7 of her first 15 calves were heifers), and it is this consistency which leads us one step closer to an understanding of what might be meant by hardiness, as expressed by adaptation to a particular environment. Here we get some insight into the delicate and invisible balance going on within an animal with regard to the various traits we ask an animal to exhibit.

At weaning, the bull calves raised by #486 had a total weight range between 640# and 680#, with an average of 660#. Interestingly, the four bull calves she raised between the ages of 4 and 10 averaged 667# at weaning, while the four bull calves she raised when she was 13 to 16 years old averaged 654#. That is consistency!

But that is not the end of the interesting details. The average weaning weight of the herd moved around on both sides of #486's progeny's weights. The weaning weights of all her bull calves averaged 25 pounds under the herd average, while the individual weights ranged from 59 pounds under the average to 59 pounds over the average. In 1994, her 10th year, her bull calf weaned at

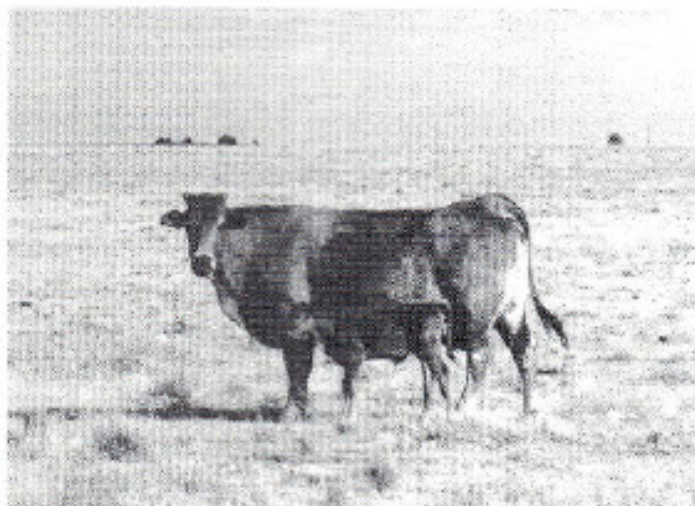
680#, while the bull calves from all other females of all ages, averaged 739#. But three years later, when she was 13 and range conditions were much less favorable, the herd weaning weight average fell 116# to 623#, while the weight of her bull calf dropped only 40# to 640# (those two years represent the total range of her bulls' weaning weights).

The Pronghorn Cow: Ready for Embryo Work

This would seem to indicate an internal mechanism capable of achieving a near-perfect balance. In a good year, when the herd average rose, she didn't get carried away, and in a subsequent year, when the herd's average weaning weight dropped dramatically, hers dropped only 5% from her high, and just 3% from her average. We call her the pronghorn cow because she comes as close as any cow we know of to achieving that perfect harmony with the natural world that the pronghorn antelope on this ranch have.

The opposite side of this coin is a 2-year-old heifer last year in this herd that weaned her first calf, a bull, weighing 681#. She weighed 785# that same day, making her calf weigh 87% of his dam's weight on the day he was weaned (at approximately ten months of age). However, she was a one-shot wonder, because even though her first calf was outstanding, she failed to breed back on schedule and left the herd. Her mates weaned bull calves weighing 65% of their body weight the day of weaning, and approximately 82% of them bred back in our forty-five-day breeding season. From among this group, we will find those who both made a strong start, and at the same time achieved that delicate balance that allowed them to continue on.

After being hauled to Colorado in April 2002, with her 16th calf at side, #486 rebred during the summer, and is scheduled to drop her 17th calf in March 2003 at 18 ½ years of age. If you want to use a truly remarkable cow in your embryo program, or a slightly younger (let's say a 12-year-old) proven producer from this herd, contact us for details.



0792 is the twelve-year-old cow pictured to the left with her 11th consecutive calf at her side. Her sixth calf, Lasater 7256, is a five-year-old herd sire that was retired this past year. 7256 has a tremendous individual and progeny performance record. In the 2000 breeding season, he was the most prolific herd sire of the bull battery, leaving a total of 53 progeny identified through DNA. This past May, the 25 bull calves sired by 7256 had an average weaning weight ratio of 108. The ninth calf from 0792 was kept as a herd sire as well. **Productivity with longevity!**

Let Your Environment Pick Your Replacement Heifers

Remember the last time you stood in the weaning pen and sorted out which heifers were going to be culled and which ones were going to be retained as replacements? Did you find yourself scratching your head, wondering if you were making the right decision? As ranchers and animal breeders, we would like to think that we could walk into a set of weaned heifer calves and pick out the ones that are going to make cows. The fact is, that aside from sorting off the extremes and those with defects, we probably are fooling ourselves if we think that the heifers we pick at weaning have a greater chance of conceiving and making cows than a straight gate cut of those same heifers.

Several years ago, Mike Meeks at Colorado State University did a study on 835 weaned heifers from three ranches to determine if measurements could effectively indicate which heifers would have a higher probability of conceiving as yearlings. Weight, hip height, the ratio of weight to hip height (w/hh), heart girth, muscle scores and condition scores were taken at approximately 9, 12 and 17 months of age. Yearling pregnancy, live calf born and two-year-old pregnancy data were also collected. When the results from all three ranches were analyzed, it was found that the correlation between the measurements taken and a heifer's probability of reproductive success was very low. **Selecting heifers based on appearance or independent measurements was ineffective in identifying, which heifers would conceive as yearlings, successfully calve as two-year-olds and then rebreed as two-year-olds.**

This being the case, **why not let your environment pick your replacement heifers?** Instead of selecting heifers at weaning or at some other point prior to the breeding season, why not keep the majority of your heifers, develop them in the environment and under the conditions in which they will have to work, breed them for a short period of time and then let them tell you who should stay? Under this system, those heifers that are early maturing and are the most fertile will select themselves. Those that are too extreme in their body type for the environment and those that are the least fertile will fall out.

The Lasater Ranch has been using this method of replacement heifer selection for years. We call it natural selection. By developing heifers in a range environment with minimum inputs and imposing a short 45 day breeding season, we have been able to select those genetics that will not only work here, but will also work in almost any environment our customers are in as well.



Available Now:

Twenty Lasater Beefmaster two and three-year-old females bred to top Lasater Herd Sires all from the Foundation Herd. Please call or write for more information.

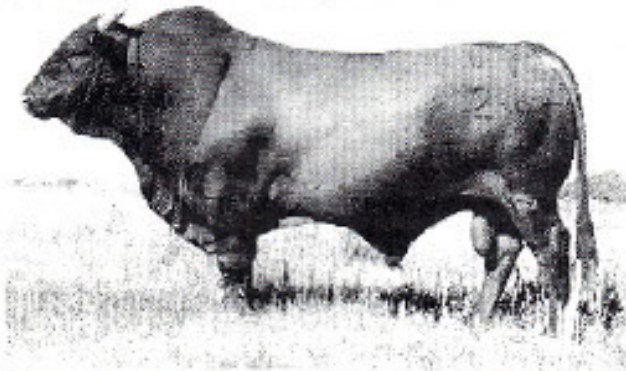
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We select cattle to work for us, so we know they will work for you.

Lasater 6129 Semen Available



Sons of Lasater 6129 continue to perform and be well accepted by commercial cattlemen and Beefmaster breeders. Eight sons of Lasater 6129 averaged \$2,850 in this year's production sale. Lasater 6129 was also the sire of the high selling bull in this year's sale. Currently, two sons of Lasater 6129 are at work in our herd. All of this adds up to consistent performance from a seasoned herd sire. Lasater 6129 is currently owned by Vista Livestock of Denair, California.

Sire: Lasater 4396	Dam: Lasater 4079
WWT 673	YWT 894
WWR 108	YWR 107
Mature Wt. 2075#	