



Foundation COMMENTARY

by R.L. "Bob" Hough, Ph.D.
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As we move into fall, things have really picked up. Crop harvesting is winding down, weaning is taking place and the November 15 date for data submission to be included in the Spring International Limousin Genetic Evaluation is very close. If you are going to sell bulls in the spring, that date is very important. Just as important is submitting the full contemporary group data and whole-herd reporting.

Without a doubt, people still like to look at the bulls they are going to purchase, but there is also no doubt our industry is becoming more data driven every year. Even the least sophisticated buyers will shop at a farm or ranch that produces the type of expected progeny difference (EPD) cattle they are looking for. They trust the seedstock producer will have the type of cattle they want, even though the buyer may not understand EPDs themselves.

The cold, hard facts of data is why crossbreeding is on its way back. Producers cannot stand back and let 25 to 30 percent of lifetime productivity go by the way side by straight breeding before waking-up one day and saying, "I have to do something about this!"

We all should honestly and objectively evaluate our individual herds, and answer the question if our individual cattle can truly contribute, when crossed to a high percentage Angus herd, in a crossbreeding system. For the vast majority of Limousin breeders, the answer will be a resounding yes. Some of you may have docility problems or not enough marbling or volume in your cattle. These can all be corrected.

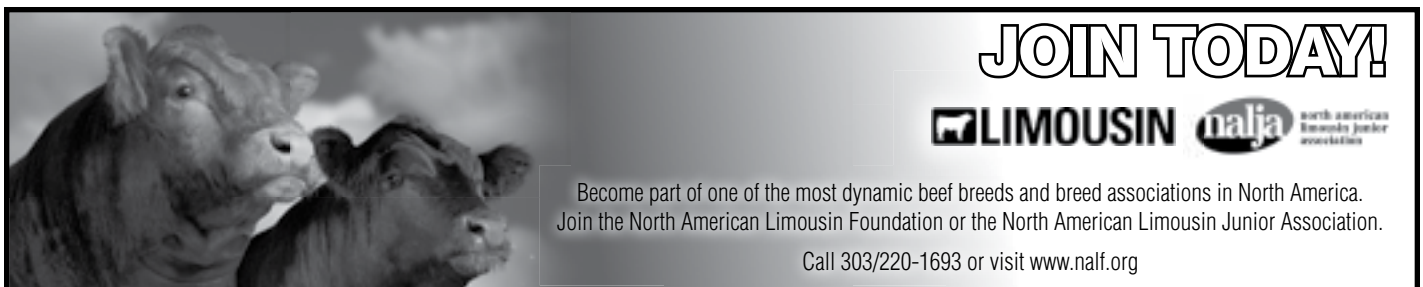
The fact of matter is, Limousin are a great fit for crossing with British-based cows. In a 2007 research report by Larry Cundiff and his colleagues from U.S. Meat Animal Research Center, they found British-based cows topping out over 1,400 pounds. By contrast, Limousin were 28 lbs. lighter than Angus, 20 lbs. lighter than Hereford, and 17 lbs. lighter than Red Angus. Who would have ever thought Limousin would be in a position to moderate the British breeds? Limousin

cattle also demonstrated great reproduction once they entered the herd. We still need to work on heifer fertility, but as more people join LIMS and we come out with a Heifer Pregnancy EPD, that will hasten that effort.

On another note, don't forget through the winter months to stay in touch with your bull customers. Far too many bull customers only hear from you when they get a catalog in the mail for that year's bull sale or a call with a list of private treaty bulls. Call them and find out how the marketing of their calves went. If they haven't marketed their calves, get them to list them on NALF's website. If they have kept them natural that is a big bonus because Laura's Lean and Strauss may have some interest in their calves. Encourage them to give preconditioning shots; it is almost a discount if they don't have them anymore. If they have load lots, have them investigate entering them into one of the age and source USDA Process Verified Programs. For many producers, selling bulls usually means being helpful in selling feeder cattle, of course that is the whole concept behind NALF's Commercial Marketing Program.

I cannot wait until next year's bull marketing season. We are going to start off with a new advertising campaign and a great National Western to showcase the breed. I defy anybody to sit through the Limousin pen and carload show and not come out excited about the breed. I am looking forward to a new clientele at the spring bull sales; ones excited about adding Limousin and Lim-Flex bulls to their largely straightbred British-based herds. Let's make sure we have the product to get them excited.

On a personal note, I want to thank everyone who sent cards, greetings and flowers during my father's passing at the end of September. From all the flowers from Limousin people, you would have thought it was a Limousin event. It really made my heart swell to know I work with such great people. **LW**



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