

Making a Logical Case for SimGenetics

By Marty Ropp, Director of Field Services



Before I go any further there are a few important facts about breeds and the beef business that need to be cleared up.

1. Maximum commercial profitability requires heterosis, which results in 25% more lifetime production and 1.5 years greater longevity per commercial female than their purebred counterparts. (Confirmed by almost every crossbreeding research trial reported for the past 40 years)

2. Continental x British crossbred cattle make more money year in and year out for cow/calf operations, cattle feeders and packers than any other breed combinations. (US Meat Animal Research Center Report 1, 2, 3,22)

3. Angus, Red Angus and Hereford, in that order, are the British breeds of choice in the US and are an important and necessary part of the American beef business. (Based on annual breed association registration information)

4. Simmental is the highest ranking Continental beef breed in the US for direct calving ease, maternal calving ease, puberty, weaning weight, post weaning gain, % Choice, tenderness, and most measures of feed efficiency. (US MARC Research Center Report #22)

If you consider these facts, there are several logical conclusions that become evident. First, regardless of some marketing propaganda to the contrary, progressive, profit-driven commercial cattlemen use crossbreeding to enhance their success.

The second conclusion is that the most successful crossbreeding systems utilize the complimentary traits of British and Continental breeds in combination. Data from the ASA Carcass Merit Program suggest these Simmental-British cross cattle will finish at around 1300 pounds, grade Choice or better at a rate of 74% and with an average fat depth of .4 inches of fat, while placing nearly 60% of the carcasses in Yield Grades 1 and 2. This is not to guarantee that a 50/50 combination is right for every situation. For most, somewhere between 25%/75% and 75%/25% will be optimal with an American breed component often being advantageous in heat-challenged climates. These producers count on British breeds to contribute maternal efficiency, marbling and convenience while the Continental component offers accelerated performance, carcass cutability and growth efficiency to their programs.

Conclusion number three: Angus is by far the most popular British breed in the US. This is not a slur toward other British breeds, nor does it mean it has always or will always be this way, but today it is a fact. Actually, the Angus and Red Angus gene pools and breed strengths are so similar they could be considered one for the purpose of crossbreeding programs.

Finally, if you accept facts 1-4 above, one must choose a Continental component to complete the puzzle and Simmental is the logical choice.

After years of advanced genetic evaluation, a commitment to research and consistent breed improvement, Simmental and SimGenetics are poised to fill that position as the most logical and profitable choice for Continental genetics. No other Continental option offers the combination of growth, carcass value, calving ease, maternal and efficiency traits that Simmental does.

Some provide comparable terminal value, others bring some useful maternal traits to the table, but SimGenetics combine both. In fact, they rank first or second in almost every economically important trait category listed in the latest MARC data. This is no accident. The ASA's Carcass Merit Program, Calving Ease Project, Tenderness Testing and new Feed Efficiency research programs are all member-funded and provide significant opportunity to evaluate and prove the next generation of superior genetics.

When you combine this with the largest database among all Continental breeds and the most proven multi-breed genetic evaluation in the entire US beef industry, Simmental breeders have all the tools necessary to make positive, consistent change faster than our competitors.

So whether you choose Simmental to complement British breed commercial females or one of our popular SimGenetics options to preserve a balance of Continental and British genetics while retaining heterosis in your herd, you can be confident you are using all of the facts available to make the most logical choice possible.