

THE PROOF IS IN THE GENETICS

Since the first Limousin cattle were imported into the United States, the breed has impacted to the beef industry. The breed's superior efficiency in turning feed and forage to pounds of beef made it a mainstay in profit-minded breeding systems and continues to do so today.

A strong commitment in continued breed improvement by members of the North American Limousin Foundation has created cattle that are relevant in a changing industry. The North American Limousin Foundation is a partner of International Genetic Solutions, which provides the largest multi-breed genetic evaluation in the world for international cattle evaluation and development of EPDs. Never in history has there been such a wide array of genetic material evaluated under one roof. The result is the deepest and broadest selection pool ever available to our industry with over 16,000,000 total animals and more than 340,000 new animals being added annually.

Calving ease and calf vigor are traits upon which the Limousin breed was founded on in this country. The Limousin breed remains a calving ease leader. Limousin influenced females are unsurpassed in terms of stayability and lifetime maternal productivity.

NALF was the first breed association to create a docility EPD, allowing both breeders and commercial producers a selection tool for this trait.

Using Limousin and Lim-Flex makes economic sense. Heterosis and breed complementarity are powerful forces that combine to produce the total crossbred advantage of beef cattle crossbreeding. This crossbred advantage can amount to as much as 25 percent greater lifetime productivity (pounds of calf weaned per cow exposed) for crossbred cows as compared to straightbred cows. Some commercial cow herds have drifted towards straightbred herds in an attempt to achieve management simplicity, greater uniformity in their cattle, and to pursue a premium (non-commodity) product. The result of this shift is the loss of most of the heterosis that once existed in many of our commercial cow herds.

Loss of heterosis shows up in the same lowly heritable traits that would be associated with inbreeding depression, namely reproductive, fitness and longevity traits. Thus, the price paid for loss of heterosis occurs as a number of very small losses that when added up can amount to a substantial sacrifice in lifetime productivity (25%).

