

# RED POLL JOURNAL

*Beef*

SUMMER 2012

VOLUME 69/NUMBER 2



## *Featuring...*

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Cows grow fat on summer pasture. We calve in the fall and take the calves off the cow in early July. Our cows wean off heavy calves and have the capacity to do well on grass alone.



Our Senior Herd Sire GS Bellringer pictured here at 28 months. His mature weight is 1900 pounds. He is a very correct bull and his offspring is adding quality to our herd. We will have heifers and bulls for sale from him this summer as well as from other breeding.

Wiese Farms purchased their first Red Polls in 1927 and they have been a part of our lives and our farming and ranching success ever since. Red Polls have many fine qualities to contribute to the beef business.

Our hope for the future of the Association is that more people come to recognize the mothering ability, the docility, the ability to do well under adverse conditions, and the quality of the finished product for the consumer that is inherent in our Red Poll breed.

Wiese Farms encourages all breeders to register their females and bulls kept for breeding, and transfer all they sell. We support Complete Herd Reporting to advance the quality of our herd and the breed, and encourage everyone to send in all carcass information that you are able to obtain.

*We wish to thank our customers from this past year!*

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Without the continued support of breeders like above who recognize the great qualities of Red Polls, we at Wiese Farms could not remain in the registered business for over 80 years.

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S: Pinpur Heritage GR34  
D: Pinpur Queenmaker Beth GR19  
EPDs: BW 1.9, WW 0, YW -2, MM 6, M&G 6

### Pinpur Regulator GR25

95142 / GR25 / CR124995B / S10CR133458  
Calved 5/11/72 S: Pinpur Heritage 92862 / GR34 S25C143057  
D: 139484 Pinpur Bona Ruby  
GR21 / CR113235 / CRD142731 / CRD142658



## New Herd Sire

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Welcome

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Expo Results

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# RED POLL Beef JOURNAL

The Red Poll Beef Journal is the official publication of the American Red Poll Association

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**Cover Photo — Red Poll cows grazing summer pasture in North Carolina.**  
**Photo courtesy of Dr. Jeff Wilkins.**

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Join the **Conversation**  
 on Facebook as a group member!

## "YOU CAN PAY TOO MUCH FOR QUALITY, BUT IT IS NOT EASY"

The above quote by Steve Cornett of Texas came to mind when Brian said this issue of the Journal was going to focus on "merchandizing." According to the math, a bull that will wean 10# heavier calves is worth at least \$1000.00 more than an average bull. The same can be said of your female selections. But how do we find these superior animals?

Your national organization has made additional tools available so you can more objectively offer information about the calves you have for sale. (This is the same information you use when selecting your own replacements.) In addition to phenotype (what they look like), pedigree, and performance records (BW, WW, YW), you can offer EPDs and DNA. All these will help in the selection of the right animal. Breeders are not buying just that one animal to be sold later, but are building for succeeding generations as well. The added quality of this generation will be multiplied in the next generation.

You are marketing pure, pedigreed Red Poll cattle. Transfer these sales to their new owners and encourage them to keep the papers through the next generation. This will tell them that you value the cattle being pure and registered.

- Dan Schmiesing, *President*



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**Starts in Perth: October 21, 2014**

**Ends in Brisbane: November 11, 2014**

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**Brian Shuter - Executive Secretary**

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# RED POLL CATTLE - The Natural Alternative!

Published on Acreage Life Magazine • <http://www.acreagelife.com>

Pure beef cattle breeds exist and thrive only to the extent that they can produce profits for their owners, across many environments, many markets and changing times. Since the development of the commercial beef industry in the United States, many breeds have come and gone; been the “keystones” of the industry and then faded away into obscurity.

Long term profitability is rare in the US beef industry. Red Poll cattle have been profitable for their owners ever since first arriving in the United States in 1873. For over 137 years, Red Polls have been working and profiting on America's Family Farms.

Many of today's Red Poll breeders are the third, fourth and fifth generations in their families to raise, promote, develop and market Red Poll cattle; a stunning testament to the profitability, consistency and longevity of the Red Poll breed.

If you are tired of chasing the fads and watching your profits dwindle, or if you are looking for long term profitability and sustainability, whether in the commercial beef market or one of the high premium alternative markets, take a look at American Red Poll cattle.



## History of Red Poll Cattle

The modern Red Poll breed was developed by combining two relatively pure landrace strains of cattle on the East Coast of England. The Suffolk cattle were a small, reddish colored, polled breed of cattle that had been developed over the generations as a dairy breed. The Norfolk cattle were small red and white, horned cattle developed primarily as a beef breed. The two strains of cattle had been developed from native cattle of the regions. The origins of the native cattle have been lost in the mists of time, but historians suggest that red cattle were brought to Great Britain by both the Romans and the Vikings.

In the early 1800's, John Reeve, a tenant on the Earl of Leicester's Holkham Estate in Norfolk, began mating his Norfolk cows to Suffolk bulls. Reeve and other breeders of the era selected cattle for both beef and milk production. Reeve's improved cattle became known as “The Red Polled Cattle Descended from the Norfolk and Suffolk Red Polled.” The small red cattle with the big name gained popularity as improved cattle and were recognized as a separate breed in 1846.

The Red Poll Herd Book was one of the

earliest purebred cattle registries in England. Henry Euren an English agricultural writer published the first Red Poll Herd Book in 1874. Using farm and estate records, Mr. Euren was able to gather pedigrees of the foundation cattle of the breed, recreating accurate records back to the beginning of the breed.

Red Poll cattle were first imported to the United States in 1873 and gained popularity quickly. Between 1873 and 1900 about 300 head of Red Poll cattle were imported into the US and it is from these cattle that the breed in the US developed. They were more heavily muscled than the cattle dominating the US dairy industry at the time. Red Polls also proved popular in the Mid-South as they seem to be more heat tolerant than most cattle.

Red Polls defied the cattle depression of the 1890's, as the demand for these cattle grew. During the 1920's more than 6,000 head were registered annually. During the Depression, registrations declined to 1,100 in 1937. Registrations rebounded to about 5,000 in the 1950's.

During the 1950s and 1960s the breed went through a period of transition – moving from being a “dual purpose” breed to being a single purpose, beef breed. The transition was considered complete and in 1972 the breed was officially declared a beef breed.

Red Poll cattle continue to thrive today on many American Family Farms; some of which have owned Red Polls for 4 or 5 generations. The population of Red Poll cattle is concentrated in the Mid-West, with herds thriving in the Endless Mountains of Pennsylvania, the Piedmont of North Carolina and the Washington Pacific Coast. There is renewed interest in the breed as both a Heritage breed and as a breed that can produce Choice quality carcasses on grass only.

## Breed Attributes

A breed's worth is based upon the cattle's ability to provide solutions to the economic needs of commercial cattlemen. Red Polls are uniquely suited to fulfill many of the economic and management needs of a wide range of commercial farmers and ranchers.

## Maternal Traits

- Red Polls are naturally fertile and rebreed quickly after calving
- Easy calving cows
- Good mothers
- Good milk producers - good udders



- Quiet Temperament
- Red Polls are quiet cattle that respond well to good handling practices, ideal for 4-H projects and for people who aren't into wild, “exciting” cattle
- Quiet cattle convert feed better
- Quiet cattle create more tender meat

## Feed Efficiency

- Feed represents the largest single cost in producing beef - the ability to efficiently convert feed to meat is critical to profitability in the cattle business - Red Polls are feed efficient
- Smaller bone structure, thinner hide, less waste mean less feed necessary for maintenance, more feed available for growth
- Moderate frame size combined with natural and selected feed efficiency gives Red Polls the ability to finish to Choice on grass

## Carcass Quality

- Red Polls are renowned for tender beef
- High Yielding Carcasses - high lean to bone ratio - more saleable product from each carcass
- Well-marbled beef - necessary for good taste and tenderness
- Consistency
- Uniform colored calves make uniform selling lots - bring higher prices
- Pre-potent bulls pass their structural style to all of their calves
- Uniform calves aid in planning the breeding program

This breed is currently on the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy list as a threatened species but it is rebounding quickly. As farmers and ranchers look for ways to improve profits, the feed efficiency of the breed is beginning to attract renewed attention. The cattle are feed efficient, and are also generating interest among small scale farmers who are looking to capitalize on grass finishing, high premium retail beef sales.

*Beef Photos Courtesy of Cattlemen's Beef Board & National Cattlemen's Beef Association*



# The Value of Red Poll Cattle in a Commercial Cross Breeding Program

By John Buxton

I have been using Red Poll cattle in a commercial cross breeding program for more than 20 years. I use a simple 2 way cross breeding program with Red Polls and South Devon's.

Many people ask me what breed the red cattle are on our farm. When I tell them that they are Red Polls it often brings a bewildered response such as "you mean Red Angus don't you?", or What are they? So why Red Polls; you ask?



When I came home to manage our beef cattle enterprise in 1981 we had Hereford cattle. They are run on an Irrigation farm in the Macalister Irrigation district north of Sale in Gippsland. We had some very good cows that could rear good calves but a lot of big fat

cows that only produced small poor quality calves. I soon realised that the Herefords were not the best breed for our farm and the market we were trying to supply.

So I embarked on a process of thinking about breeds of cattle that would best utilize the resources of our farm and satisfy the market we are trying to supply.

I drew up a list of requirements. It went something like this.

- Fertility.
- Early puberty.
- Ability to rear a good quality heavy calf.
- Polled.
- Good carcasses that would attract butchers.
- Solid colour, and no white which suffer from the photo problems.

We first tried some Simmentals. They were very good however they still had white areas on their bodies and they threw some very large calves which required assistance.

Investigating a chart which showed the differences in various characteristics of different breeds led me to Red Polls because they had low days to puberty, lower birth weights and lower mature cow weights than other breeds. In addition to this I noticed that Red Polls winnings in carcass competitions far exceeded the % of the cattle population that they represent.

The next step was to find some Red Poll herds and go for a look. There was not a lot of herds around. I was impressed with the type of cows that I saw. Very sound and a lot of very old cows that were still productive. Hereford cows in this environment tended to put on very large amounts of fat. Well in excess of 20 mls at the P8 site. These cows were heavily discounted by meat processors. These cows were wasting resources. That problem has disappeared with the Red Poll cross cows. I bought a bull, I think it would have been in 1985 and I am still using them. From time to time my mind considers other possibilities and I always come back to the same conclusion.

*Article: Courtesy of The Australian Red Poll Cattle Breeders Inc.*

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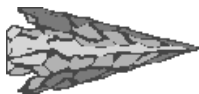
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Thank you to R & R Farm and Hard Times Farm  
for their Broken Brick purchases at the  
Kentucky Beef Expo Red Poll Sale.



# Marketing Seedstock -- A Serious Business

Part I of a series

By Eric Grant

Making a living in the seedstock business can be a serious proposition.

Year in and year out, producing seedstock costs more in time and money than it does produce commercial cattle. Not only are seedstock producers faced with day-to-day production management challenges that all producers must attend to, they also must spend countless hours away from home, meeting with long-time customers and building relationships with new clients. They must contend with registration and performance paperwork, strive continuously to maintain the integrity of their information and make ruthless culling and selection decisions that set the genetic trends of their cowherds for years to come.

In addition, seedstock producers must implement marketing programs – programs that can add up to considerable expense and time. Most importantly, they must have the courage of conviction to either stay with their long-term strategies, or to know when to abandon them when they're not working.

Still, unprecedented opportunities exist for producers willing to plan ahead and take calculated risks in order to carve out a niche in this increasingly competitive business. This series of articles contain tools that you can use to make the right decisions to guide you through good times and bad. Hopefully, the information will have lasting and beneficial impacts on your operation.

The articles include industry trends on your business to help make educated management decisions and assist you in developing price-discovery systems for financial planning. The information will also show you how the telephone, the car or even a hand-written letter can help build your client base and keep existing customers for the long term. There's also technical information on advertising production – for radio, print and direct mail – that will help ensure the dollars you invest in marketing, return great dividends to your enterprise.

## Step 1: How Much Are Your Seedstock Cattle Worth?

Determining the value of registered cattle has always been a challenge for seedstock producers. You should consider several general rules regarding price discovery before setting your marketing plan budget.



\*Demand for different breeds varies significantly from year to year.

\*Demand for different breeds varies from region to region. Individual breeds will always have regional strongholds and weaknesses.

\*Changes in bull prices reflect changes in calf and fed cattle markets. Data gleaned from an analysis of bull markets since the early 1980s show relationships between calf and bull markets do exist. The average annual price for bulls sold during these two decades was almost always equal to 22 times the 450-pound steer calf price. For example, if the price for the calf was \$95/cwt. in any given year, then the price for bulls was \$2,090 (95 × 22). The price can also be determined by multiplying the 650-pound calf price by 25, or the fed cattle price by 29.

\*Tough cattle markets mean seedstock producers must work harder for market share than any other segment. Simply put, when times are good, seedstock producers do well – probably better than their commercial customers – but when times are bad, they typically do worse. It's the whip-lash effect, and seedstock producers unlike any other segment find themselves on the end of the whip more often than not.

Typically, the seedstock business over-responds to increasing or decreasing cow herd numbers, much like being at the end of a whip, which puts it in an extremely good bargaining position half of the time and an extremely bad one during the other half.

Watch the fed cattle and corn markets closely as a method of determining the overall profitability of your commercial customers. When fed prices are good, they build value into your customers' feeder calf price, which, in turn, builds value into prices they can pay

for your bulls. When prices take a downturn, and feedlots start to lose money, they must pay less for calves. Conversely when corn prices are good, feedlots must pay less for calves, which negatively impacts bull prices. And when corn prices are low, the calf price goes up – and so does the price for bulls.

"This tells a seedstock producer a lot about the business he's in," says Tom Brink, an economist for Continental Grain. "He's in a business in which he cannot expect prices of the products he sells to rise as fast over the long term as his business expense will. The challenge he has is to continually become more efficient."

\*Like all commodities, bull prices don't keep pace with inflation. Bull prices are so closely tied with the calf and fed markets, that the affect of inflation is minimal.

Like producers of any commodity, seedstock producers must do one of three things to stay competitive over the long haul: sell more product, cut costs – or break out of commodity orientation by adding value to their products (more on this in a minute).

Perhaps most importantly, seedstock producers who are actively involved in the marketing of their customers' cattle stand the best chance of increasing the sales price – of their cattle. This is where bulls stop being a commodity, and when they start becoming a value-added product.

Today, more than any time in the history of the beef business, successful seedstock producers are heavily involved in the success of their customers, locating feedlots to place their calves, customers to buy them, or branded beef programs through which their genetics can marketed and receive a premium price.

Activities such as this create a "pull-through" effect that adds value to seedstock. In fact, many seedstock producers who work with their customers in this way have seen the average prices for their bulls and heifers exceed market averages by many hundreds of dollars.

No doubt this will play an even larger role in the economic success of seedstock producers in the future.

## Chris Raines Memorial Fund Contributors

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## Merle Warren Ebers

Merle Warren Ebers was born November 3, 1921, at the family farm in Seward, Nebraska to Herman W. and Meta E. (Wurst) Ebers and passed away Friday, March 30, 2012 at the age of 90 years, 4 months, and 27 days. He attended school through eighth grade at Star School District #58 and graduated from Milford High School in 1939. He attended the University of Nebraska receiving his teaching degree in 1948, his Masters Degree in 1952, and his School Administrator Degree in 1953. He married Leona Abrahams on March 25, 1944, in Marysville, Kansas. Merle was a life-long educator starting his teaching career in Franklin, Nebraska followed by Hastings and Guide Rock, Nebraska. He returned to the family farm where he combined farming with the school administration duties of first, Principal, then Superintendent of Beaver Crossing Public Schools. Many of his school evening were spent refereeing either football or basketball games. He was instrumental in organizing and establishing the Centennial School District after which he became the Administrator of Service Unit VI, a position he held for twenty years before retiring in 1986. During his tenure as head of the Service Unit, he was appointed by Governor Jim Exon to form Southeast Community College. His retirement from education allowed him to enjoy his farm, his Red Poll cattle, and rattlesnake hunting. Merle was a fifty-plus year member of the Masonic Fraternity, a member of the National Red Poll Association, the Nebraska Farmer's Co-op, the Nebraska Crop Improvement Association, and the Nebraska State Education Association. He and Leona received the Con-Agra Farm Family Award in July 1993.



Merle is preceded in death by his, wife Leona; parents, Herman and Meta Ebers; grandson, Anthony Ebers, great-grandson Jacob Vinton; brothers-in-law, Wayne Blue and William Larson.

Merle by his sons and daughters-in-law, William and Cheryl Ebers of Lincoln, Marvin Ebers of Jacksonville, FL, Larry and Nelda Ebers of Paola, KS; daughters and sons-in-law, Nancy Range and special friend, Bill Gibson of Lindale, GA, Sandra Zulkoski of Seward, Kyla and Mark Unick of Edwardsville, IL; 23 grandchildren; 35 great-grandchildren; sister, Janet Blue of Lincoln, NE; and Virginia Larsen of Oakland, NE; brother and sister-in-law, Ralph and Shirley Ebers of Lincoln, NE; many nieces and nephews and a host of friends both here and across the country. To this obituary we add our thoughts, prayers, and memories of life shared with Merle.



**Logo designs need to be submitted at the AJRPA Summer Preview Show.** Include your name, address, phone number and e-mail address (if applicable) with your design submission. Camera ready or computer designed in an artwork program are best, but not required. It is intended that the design will be used to place on items (apparel and other items) to be sold.

**Submit designs to:**  
**Lynda Ziegler**

By mail, before June 12: 8862 E 450 N Columbus, IN 47203  
E-mail to: farmnp@yahoo.com  
Call: 812-546-9450 or 812-344-3241 for questions

Voting will take place at the AJRPA meeting to be held in Alexandria, IN in conjunction with the 2012 AJRPA Summer Preview Show, June 15-17. All designs become the property of AJRPA. The winning designer will receive a prize to be determined by the JR Re-organization Committee.



# Producers Must Build Value Into Their Cattle

By Eric Grant

## Part III in a series

The long-term challenge for seedstock producers is identifying ways to build value into their cattle without going overboard on expenses. There are several, general ways of doing so:

**1) Register your cattle.** That's why breed associations exist – and why thousands of seedstock producers around the world are members of them. Associations are built on the premise that registered cattle simply are worth more. That premise has held true for centuries. Even producers who raise and market composite breeds can tap the power of breed association these days. Most of the major breed associations now accept and offer registrations for composite cattle, can maintain pedigrees on these cattle and in some cases even produce Expected Progeny Differences (EPDs) for use by the breeders.

**2) Keep good records on your cattle.** Surveys show that most commercial producers now use Expected Progeny Differences (EPDs) to determine their bull-buying purchases. If you don't gather data – and report this data to your association -- you will not have the information you need to compete with those producers who do.

**3) Gather and evaluate economic information.** Taking an in-depth look at the feedlot and carcass profitability of progeny of different sires or bloodlines in your cow herd can go a long way in improving the bottom lines for your customers. Most feedlots these days work hard to provide all sorts of individual-animal information on the cattle they feed to the people who place cattle in their lots; they do so because it's in their best economic interest to have profitable cattle.

Most packers can also provide individual animal carcass data to producers.

No doubt, the beef industry stands at the threshold of fundamental change in the way it analyzes the performance and profitability of the cattle it produces. Soon, seedstock producers will have at their disposal economic analysis tools that take livestock evaluation to another level, above and beyond EPDs. Economic models, and marker and gene-assisted selection will become a reality for making selection and culling decisions. As a seedstock producer, you should gain as much understanding of these technologies as you can, and be willing to adopt them once they become more reliable.

**4) Take an active role in ensuring the profitability of your customers and their customers.** Successful seedstock producers today are just as concerned about the profitability of their customers as they are with their own operations. The rise of retained ownership, alliances, vertical integration and greater producer accountability of product quality means seedstock producers must take into account a whole new set of traits, namely carcass and beef quality traits, rather than just growth, feed efficiency and fertility in their selection.

Therefore, seedstock producers who work with their customers to evaluate and compile carcass and economic information will have a leg up on their competition. In the long run

if they are able to base culling and selection decisions on this data, they will improve the quality of carcasses and the profitability for all segments of the beef industry.



**5) Commercial producers don't just buy bulls; they buy philosophy.** Take a look at the most successful seedstock producers in the country, and you'll find they have one thing in common: an ability to articulate what they believe in (their philosophy) and what their program stands for. They

have a clear understanding of their mission, where their program is headed, and what other producers have to gain by using their genetics.

In other words, it's not just a matter of selling cattle. It's building ideas behind your product, and using these ideas to carve out a niche for your business.

**6) Promote your cattle.** Keep in mind that marketing and promotions take many forms, such as advertising, direct mail, telephone calls, customer visits, bull test stations or the show ring. What works best for you depends on your own individual situation, your philosophy and what resources you have at your disposal.

Often, the most success marketing program simply begins by delivering quality products and backing them up with good customer service. Word of mouth is often the single-most effective way to build your customer base. If you have satisfied customers who are recommending your program to others, then your chances of launching and maintaining a successful marketing and advertising program are greatly enhanced.

**7) Build trust.** Ultimately, the seedstock business is a people business. And people pay more for cattle from people they know and trust. Your reputation may be the most valuable asset you have in building long-term value into your cattle, and ensuring your seedstock business is around for years to come.

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## Red Poll Cattle: Heritage Livestock Breeds

*Hardy and gentle Red Poll cattle produce enough beef and milk to work as dual-purpose homestead livestock.*

*By Janet Vorwald Dohner • July 12, 2010*

ILLUSTRATION: CAROLYN GUSKE

A heritage livestock breed known for their deep red coloring, Red Poll cattle are also an early-maturing meat production cow. Also a good milking cow breed, Red Poll cattle make an ideal homestead livestock choice. Norfolk and Suffolk Counties lie on the large East Anglian peninsula on the eastern coast of England. This area includes dark, rich farmland, the reclaimed marshland of the Broadland, and the sandy heath of the Breckland. After Roman control of Britain ended, Saxons from the Danish and northern German coast settled throughout eastern England. Viking raiders later came from Norway, and these invaders owned both red and dun-colored polled cattle, which they probably introduced to the country. Combined with the native cattle, local breed types arose that were well suited to the needs of the farmers and dairymen.

The now extinct Suffolk Dun was a cow of exceptional milking ability. Even with minimal feeding and care, the Suffolk Dun was thought to be the greatest producer in England. The polled Suffolk Dun was a small cow with lean dairy conformation, a large belly to accommodate large amounts of poor roughage, a large udder, and a ridged backbone. Although the breed was named for the traditional dun color, in shades of yellowish brown to mouse gray, the Suffolk Dun was also colored cream, brindle or red. The dun color was not especially striking, and that may have affected its loss of popularity in favor of such colors as the dramatic reds. Had it survived, the Suffolk Dun would have been very useful to dairy farmers and breeders.

In Norfolk, the descendants of old middle-horned cattle were often colored red with a white face. Although some writers in the 18th century disparaged the local Norfolk Red, others noted the breed's hardiness and ability to grow beef.

Guided by the belief that their local cattle were the most suited to the land, dual-purpose breeders began to merge the best of the two breeds around the beginning of the 19th century. One breeder named Jonas Reeve displayed his New Red Polled cattle at the Norfolk Show even earlier. The two counties of Norfolk and Suffolk merged their agricultural societies in 1846 and classes for the new breed, called the Improved Norfolk and Suffolk Red Polled, were seen at the Royal Agricultural Society show by 1862. The first herd book was published

in 1874, and the name was changed to Red Poll in 1882. There was no provision for upgrading. Milking records were included 10 years later.

The first herd book established red as the official color of the breed. The deep, rich red remains the preferred color. White is seen in the hair on the tail switch and in front of the udder. The udder is large and prominent. Any trace of horns or scurs has become unacceptable. The Red Poll gives the impression of a short cow, but it is heavy and sturdily built. Bulls weigh about 2,000 pounds and cows about 1,250 pounds.

The 1940s and 1950s were the height of the Red Poll's popularity, especially in East Anglia, where it was the dominant breed. Red Poll owners admit that the demand for breeding stock caused unsuitable animals to be used, which affected the breed's reputation.

Facing increased pressure from the Friesian in dairying, the society introduced Danish Red cattle and created a more productive British Red or Danish Red section in the herd book. Some longtime breeders were so offended that they removed themselves from the society. Others saw the breed's most admirable traits slipping away. The Red Poll was an early maturing, hardy, long-lived breed that did not need large amounts of concentrates to produce beef and milk. There was also concern that Danish cattle introduced fertility problems into the breed.

With the failure of this experiment, breed numbers fell until the society was reorganized in 1980. At that time, there were some 20 herds and 148 registered cows. Only 13 herds were being milked. Additional Red Polls may have been present in milking or suckler herds.

The Red Poll Cattle Society and the RBST have encouraged the traditional traits and uses of the breed, and there are now about 1,000 breeding females. Red Polls are used equally in dairy and suckler herds, with cows often able to nurse a second adoptive calf as well. Their milk has small, easily digestible fat globules. Cows average about 8,800 pounds of milk annually, with some dairy farmers achieving even higher yields while still using farm-raised forages. The society and RBST are also promoting a milk-recording program to assist



breeders in breeding choices. Bull calves and heifers not needed as replacements can be raised for excellent returns as beef.

Many British breeders feel that the Red Poll's future lies in preserving its dual nature, feeling that it cannot compete with the fashionable breeds in either milk or beef production. A solid, economical dual-purpose breed will continue to find a place on farms.

The Red Poll actually achieved greater popularity in the United States before it did in Britain. The old Norfolk and Suffolk cattle had made their way to the United States during colonial times but did not survive as breeds. From 1873 to 1887, more than 300 Improved Norfolk and Suffolk Red Polled cattle were imported from England. The American Red Poll Cattle Association was formed in 1883. With the development of the railroads, western ranches began looking toward the beefy polled breeds of Britain, including the Angus, Galloway and Red Poll.

Canadian ranches also imported the Red Poll, which were often called moolies or mulies, from the Celtic word for polled. In eastern Canada, the government of New Brunswick was in possession of a small herd by 1873. The most successful breed promoter was H. C. Clendening of Manitoba, who assisted in the formation of the Canadian Red Poll Association in 1906. The breed became very popular in the 1950s but has decreased significantly since then. Canadian registrations average about 220 annually. Although commercial dairy herds were in existence until the early 1980s, the breed is also promoted for cow-calf beef production. The greatest number of herds is now in Alberta and Ontario. The association has maintained a closed herd book, and purebred cattle can be traced back to the English imports.

In the United States, the Red Poll was regarded at first as a dual-purpose breed, displaying the variation in type from a dairy to beefy appearance. Mainly building on the stock present in the country, the numbers of Red Poll cattle increased until the American association was registering about 6,000 head each year by the late 1920s. The Depression years caused a slight setback in numbers, but registrations resumed at about the same numbers by the 1950s. At about this time, the beef production traits began to be encouraged until the Red Poll was officially declared a beef breed in 1972, and soon after, the name was changed to the American Red Poll Association.

Unfortunately, the population was also decreasing. Since the 1960s, the breed has averaged fewer than 2,000 registrations annually. In 1990, this number was about 1,400, with only one milking herd remaining in production. Upgrading is allowed in the registry.

Red Polls are early maturing cattle that produce a choice carcass at 14 months of about 650 to 700 pounds. Mature bulls weigh 1,800 to 2,200 pounds and cows 1,100 to 1,300 pounds. The darker red color is more popular, but Red Polls are seen in various shades of red. White is often seen on the underline, udder and tail switch.

Red Polls are still abundant milkers and therefore do well in crossbred calf operations. Breeders report that, because the cows are so milky, they lose weight dramatically during nursing and regain it after weaning. Herd owners also appreciate the Red Poll's maternal traits and easy-to-handle temperament. As crossbreeding use increases, the challenge will be to maintain sufficient purebred animals. Breeders

also need to retain the breed's excellent milking ability. Red Polls are notably long-lived, hardy and gentle. Their feet are especially strong, and their pigmented skin affords them excellent protection against sunburn.

The American Red Poll has demonstrated its excellent crossbreeding possibilities in specific situations. The Red Poll has contributed to the Senepol, developed in St. Croix by crossings with the African N'Dama. Senepols are growing in popularity on the U.S. mainland as well. The Red Poll has also performed well in Jamaica, originally as a dairy animal but later shifting to beef production. A small introduction of Zebu genetics has given these cattle — now known as the Jamaica Red — additional tropical strengths but has not overwhelmed the breed. The Jamaica Red is very popular and successful on Jamaica, and it enjoys a tremendous export market that actually exceeds supply. The Red Poll has also been crossed on Pitangueiras and Velazquez cattle in South America.

British and American Red Polls have been exported to Australia, New Zealand, South America and parts of Africa, where they are used for dairy, suckler and beef herds.

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*Our thanks to Yale University Press for its kind permission to post this profile from **The Encyclopedia of Historic and Endangered Livestock and Poultry Breeds** by Janet Vorwald Dohner (Yale University, 2001). This book describes the history and characteristics of almost 200 breeds of livestock.*

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## SVF Foundation – Looking for Red Poll Genetics

SPRING 2012

SVF Foundation, [www.svffoundation.org](http://www.svffoundation.org), located at Swiss Village Farm in Newport, RI is a nonprofit organization collaborating with Tufts University. We are thrilled to announce that in 2012, SVF will begin work on preserving the unique heritage genetics represented within Red Poll cattle. For the past decade we have striven to collect and cryo-preserve a wide variety of endangered breeds of livestock. To this point, SVF has focused on semen, embryo, cell, and blood collection of cattle, sheep and goats. Examples of cattle breeds we have worked with thus far include Ancient White Park, American Milking Devon, Dutch Belted, Canadienne, Milking Shorthorn (native) and Kerry.

In 2012, SVF would like to start work on obtaining semen (either purchasing or custom collecting bulls) from various Red Poll bloodlines. By the time our semen collection is rounded out, it would ideally include 3,000 straws from at least 15-20 diverse bulls, representing a variety of genetics from beefy, milky and dual-purpose lines. This process generally takes at least 3-5 years to complete, since certain bulls or bloodlines are not always available for immediate collection.

After identifying which bulls to collect (by reviewing photos, pedigree and anecdotal information), SVF has found success with the following program:

- SVF pays the breeders vet for a thorough physical exam and health testing (including TB, Brucellosis, Johnes, BVD, BLV, Blue Tongue & Anaplasmosis)
- Once negative results are received, SVF pays for semen collection

- We either arrange for a custom collector to visit the breeders farm; 20% of whatever is collected in 1-2 jumps is donated back to the breeder in thanks for allowing us to work with the bull; the other 80% is shipped to SVF for storage.

- OR we send the bull to a bull stud and contract approx 150-200 units to be collected. Again, 20% of the desired straw count is donated to the breeder and the remaining straws are sent to SVF

SVF also have the option to receive as donation or purchase straws which have already been collected. Ideally those bulls would have been tested negative for our screening panel prior to collection, and pedigree and photos would be available for our database. If semen is donated to the program SVF provides a Letter of Charitable Donation for the bull owner to use for tax purposes.

In 2013, once we have at least 5-6 bulls in the tank, the plan is to begin embryo collection with prospective donor cows. I would like to see at least 8-12 cows from different backgrounds included in our program, as we work to collect and cryo preserve 200-300 embryos from the Red Poll breed. SVF is happy to either purchase cows directly, receive donations (again, in exchange for a Letter of Charitable Donation for the farmers tax purposes) or “free lease”, where a cow comes to SVF for one year for embryo collection and is returned after being bred



back. Again, SVF pays for all health testing requirements and transportation costs. Since our goal is to represent genetic diversity of the breed we do not want to over represent any one female donor's genetics in our collection; therefore embryo collections are kept to a maximum of 3-4 per donor, and performed by our highly reputable bovine veterinarian from Tufts.

Since this is a “one way bank”, SVF does not typically release germplasm once collected. Samples are maintained for perpetuity, and our panel of scientific advisors keeps an eye out for a scenario where these genetics would be appropriate for use (if a breed goes extinct or certain samples would be useful for research, etc).

Please contact SVF's Program Manager, Sarah Bowley [sarah@svffoundation.org](mailto:sarah@svffoundation.org) or 401.848.7229 x 14 if you have any questions or feel that your Red Poll cattle will aid us in our mission to represent the genetic diversity of this amazing breed.

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As breeders of pure Red Poll cattle we have always been proud of our heritage. We now have an organization that is interested in helping us preserve this great breed of cattle. I encourage everyone to go to [www.svffoundation.org](http://www.svffoundation.org) to learn more about their organization. SVF Foundation has not come to us with their hands out requesting donations, but for help in locating quality Red Poll cattle. If you know of someone that has Red Polls and might be interested in this but does not receive the Journal, please let us know. Contact SVF's Program Manager, Sarah Bowley at the Foundation with any and all questions. Jo-Ellen Greene and I will help from the Red Poll end. I do not want this opportunity to bypass the Red Poll breed.

Dan Schmiesing

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# Beef: Marketing Beef Carcasses as Direct Sales

By Dr. John Comerford

Beef cattle can be marketed in a number of ways:

- Selling cattle based on live weight
- Direct marketing carcasses as whole, halves or quarters based on a hot carcass weight
- Direct marketing carcasses as whole, halves or quarters as fabricated, frozen cuts
- Direct marketing single or packages of individual, frozen cuts

A recent survey of 26 grass-fed beef producers in the mid-Atlantic region (Steinberg et al, 2009) indicated that over 76 percent of the producers sold their beef both as carcass sides and quarters and as individual retail cuts. The average price of the carcass sides and quarters was \$2.25 per pound and for the individual retail cuts was \$4.96 per pound.

Much has changed in the market for beef cattle since those figures were compiled. Live cattle have recently sold at \$1.08 per pound, and carcass values have exceeded \$1.80 per pound in the commodity beef market. Carcass beef that was priced to consumers for direct sale for \$2 per pound as little as eight to 10 months ago is now worth \$2.50 per pound. Still, I have recently visited with beef producers who sell direct to consumers who have not adjusted their prices accordingly.

Consumers are often confused by the amount of beef they actually take home from the processor compared to the weight of the carcass or carcass component they purchased. Table 1 describes the amount of meat a consumer should expect to take home compared to the carcass weights they purchase.

**Table 1. Estimates of the take-home weight of beef from a 1,110-pound steer at harvest**

<b>Whole carcass</b>	<b>Forequarter</b>
Hot carcass weight . . . 700 lbs.	Hot carcass weight . . . 190 lbs.
Take-home weight . . . 225 lbs.	Take-home weight . . . 146 lbs.
<b>Carcass Side</b>	<b>Hindquarter</b>
Hot carcass weight . . . 350 lbs.	Hot carcass weight . . . 160 lbs.
Take-home weight . . . 262 lbs.	Take-home weight . . . 115 lbs.

**Table 2. Determination of breakeven cost for carcass sales**

Initial cost of steer (600 lbs. @ \$1.30/lb.) . . . . .	\$780
Feed costs (ADG of 3 lbs./d @ \$.78/lb.: 600 lbs.) . . .	\$468
Transportation cost . . . . .	\$5
Processing fee . . . . .	\$75
Cutting, wrapping and freezing fee . . . . .	\$675
Advertising and promotion . . . . .	\$2
<b>Total costs . . . . .</b>	<b>\$2,005</b>
Breakeven: hot carcass weight (60% dress) . . . . .	<b>\$2.78/lb.</b>
Breakeven: packaged cuts (75% of carcass weight) .	<b>\$3.71/lb.</b>

Before a producer can effectively price their product directly to consumers, one will have to know the cost of production. There is no way to define a profit until this cost is known. This result follows from the definition of profit:

$$\text{Profit} = \$ \text{sale value} - \$ \text{cost of production}$$

The cost of both cattle, either as a purchase price or as an "opportunity" cost at the initiation of the finishing phase, and feedstuffs has changed dramatically in recent months. Corn, for example, recently recorded a record price over \$8 per bushel on commodity markets. It does not appear either of these costs is going to change dramatically in the next few months. Table 2 represents some typical costs for production in the current market for cattle and feedstuffs.

## Pricing

The first step in pricing a carcass or cuts from it is to determine the breakeven value for each component. Table 3 describes the percentage of the weight of a carcass from several components and their estimated value.

From Table 3, it can be shown the value of a rib-eye steak is \$6.72 per pound at these commodity prices (3 percent of 750 pounds is 22.5 pounds; \$151.20 total value/22.5 pounds is \$6.72 per pound). The same process indicates if the round is ground into ground beef, the value of ground beef from this carcass is \$3.03 per pound.

Recognize also the additional costs to the customer are not part of this value - cutting, wrapping, freezing and transportation. If the seller is providing these services, these costs must be added to the price of the product. Additionally, value-added products must be priced accordingly. For example, "natural" beef that was produced without the aid of growth promotants or antibiotics generally costs about 16 percent more to produce than commodity beef. The value of the rib-eye steak from the "natural" carcass then has a minimum value of \$8 per pound. The same scenario applies to grass-fed beef as well. The Steinberg et al (2009) survey indicated it costs 25 to 30 percent more to produce grass-fed beef than commodity beef, so pricing should be adjusted for these values.

Given the costs for production shown in Table 2, it is clear that adjusting prices for direct sales of beef are needed in many cases. Sellers should be aware of the changes occurring in the conventional beef markets so their sales can reflect the current value of the product.

Dr. John Comerford is associate professor of dairy and animal science at the Pennsylvania State University.

**Table 3. Component percentages of a carcass and their estimated value**

Component	% of hot carcass weight	% of total value	Total value
<b>Chuck . . . . .</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>30.0%</b>	<b>\$405.00</b>
<b>T-Bone and sirloin . . . . .</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>32.0%</b>	<b>\$432.00</b>
<b>NY strip . . . . .</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>\$157.95</b>
<b>Tenderloin . . . . .</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>\$135.00</b>
<b>Top sirloin . . . . .</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>7.1%</b>	<b>\$95.85</b>
<b>Rib eye . . . . .</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>11.2%</b>	<b>\$151.20</b>
<b>Round . . . . .</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>32.0%</b>	<b>\$432.20</b>

<sup>1</sup> Based on a total carcass value of \$1.80/lb. for 750 lbs. (\$1,350 total value).

# Kentucky Beef Expo Sale Results

The 2012 Kentucky Beef Expo Show and Sale was a successful event for the Kentucky Red Poll Association. Interest was good for the 26 lots that were presented for sale on Saturday, March 3rd in Louisville and the Kentucky Fair and Expo Center in Louisville, Kentucky. After the final bid rang in, the 26 lots grossed \$29,175 and averaged \$1122 with a high majority of the offering being young, open heifers.

Jackson Farms consigned the Grand Champion Bull, JF Sluggar, a powerful September 2010 herd sire prospect sired by JF Alex. Sluggar found a new home in Grove City, MN with Peterson Farms with a sale price of \$2350. Doll's Red Polls consigned the Reserve Champion Bull, Doll's "C" Pikeville, a stylish November 2010 son of Parkstyle Cisco. Jackson Farms of Greens Fork, Indiana bid \$2500 on this crowd favorite to make him the top selling lot and to add him to their powerful bull battery.

The only Cow in the offering, Young's LV Ann 09, born in November of 2009, was consigned by Matthew Young and purchased by Doll's Red Polls of Union, KY for \$1950. The Grand Champion Bred Heifer was also consigned by Matthew Young and purchased by Doll's Red Polls for \$1950 as well. She was Young's LV 21, a Level View New Look daughter

that was born in March of 2010. This beautiful female was exhibited earlier in the summer by Matthew Young at the Junior Preview Show where she was named Reserve Grand Champion. Matthew sure brought his good ones to town.

In the Open Heifer division, Jackson Farms swept the show, winning both Grand and Reserve Grand Champion Open Heifer. The Grand Champion heifer was a February 2011 daughter of JF Y2K Compatible and was purchased by Adam Miller of Finchville, Ky for 1300. The Reserve Grand Champion Open Heifer was JF Roxanne, an April 2011 heifer sired by JF Y2K Compatible. Roxanne headed to Fairland, Indiana with Cameron Spegal at a price of \$1050. Other high selling open heifer calves included Shuter's Steel Magnolia, a February 2011 Shuter's Tuff Enuff daughter consigned by Shuter Sunset Farms and purchased by LJ Roederer of Columbus, Indiana and Doll's "C" Broadlight, a July 2011 heifer calf out of Parkstyle Cisco, consigned by Doll's Red Polls and purchased by Tyocia Ziegler of Hope, Indiana for \$1550. Most likely all four of these top selling open heifers will be in the hunt in the upcoming National Red Poll Junior Preview Show in Indiana in June.

## Kentucky Beef Expo Sale Results

<b>Grand Champion Bull</b> <b>Price: \$2,350</b>	<b>Lot: # 1</b> Consignor: Jackson Farms, Greenfork, IN Buyer: Peterson Farms, Grove City, MN
<b>Reserve Champion Bull</b> <b>Price: \$2,500</b>	<b>Lot: # 2</b> Consignor: Doll's Red Poll, Union, KY Buyer: Jackson Farms, Greenfork, IN
<b>Grand Champion Cow</b> <b>Price: \$1,950</b>	<b>Lot: # 7</b> Consignor: Matthew Young, Simpsonville, KY Buyer: Doll's Red Poll, Union, KY
<b>Grand Champion Bred Heifer</b> <b>Price: \$1,950</b>	<b>Lot: # 8</b> Consignor: Matthew Young, Simpsonville, KY Buyer: Doll's Red Poll, Union, KY
<b>Grand Champion Open Heifer</b> <b>Price: \$1,300</b>	<b>Lot: # 14</b> Consignor: Jackson Farms, Greenfork, IN Buyer: Adam Miller, Finchville, KY
<b>Reserve Champion Open Heifer</b> <b>Price: \$1,050</b>	<b>Lot: # 24</b> Consignor: Jackson Farms, Greenfork, IN Buyer: Cameron Spegal, Fairland, IN

## Other Top Lots

<b>Female</b> <b>Price: \$1,600</b>
<b>Lot: #5</b> Consignor: Shuter's Sunset Farm, Frankton, IN Buyer: R & R Farms, Guston, KY
<b>Female</b> <b>Price: \$1,550</b>
<b>Lot #31</b> Consignor: Doll's Red Poll, Union, KY Buyer: Tyocia Ziegler, Columbus, IN

<b>Lots</b>	<b>Gross</b>	<b>Average</b>
26	\$29,175	\$1,122

# *Kentucky Beef Expo Show Results*



**Champion Bull**  
Jackson Farms



**Reserve Champion Bull**  
Doll's Red Polls



**Champion Open Female**  
Jackson Farms



**Reserve Champion Open Female**  
Jackson Farms



**Champion Bred Female**  
Matthew Young

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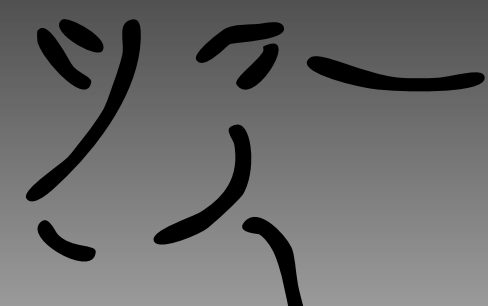


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