

LASATER "The Pedigree
Is in the Name"
BEEFMASTER®
FOUNDATION HERD OF THE BEEFMASTER BREED

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The 6 Essentials
DISPOSITION
FERTILITY
WEIGHT
CONFORMATION
HARDINESS
MILK PRODUCTION

Spring 2003
NEWSLETTER

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

FLESHING ABILITY

Fleshing ability has been defined as "An animal's ability to gain and/or maintain body condition on limited feed." The terms "easy keeping," "easy fleshing" and "good doing" are terms given to cattle that demonstrate this trait. The opposite of easy fleshing cattle are those that are "hard keepers" or "poor doers." These cattle tend to lose body condition more quickly when nutrition is short and are slower to respond and gain condition when good quality forage is available. Easy fleshing cattle rapidly pick up body condition when moving from a time of a nutrition deficit into a time of plenty. These cattle also have the ability to lay down fat when times are good and then use that fat effectively to maintain themselves when times are lean.

One thing visitors to the ranch have been commenting on through this drought is the fleshing ability of the cattle. "It is amazing how good the cattle look considering these conditions" is a phrase often heard from those visiting. Customers who have purchased cattle here and moved them to other locations have consistently commented that their Lasater Beefmaster® cows and bulls are their easiest fleshing genetics and seem to be able to produce more with less feed than other cattle they have in production.

When it comes to fleshing ability, what sets Lasater Beefmaster® Genetics apart? The answer is our selection program. All cows are required to breed and raise a calf every year on native prairie with a minimum amount of supplemental feed. Cows that aren't able to meet these criteria are removed.

Fleshing ability has been bred into Lasater Beefmaster® Genetics, not fed into them.

We set high standards and require our cattle to perform and work just like they would in a commercial operation. The results of this type of selection are easy fleshing genetics that will work in minimum input environment.



**Lasater Beefmaster Field
Day and Sale Will Be Held
September 9 & 10, 2003**

**90 Two-Year-Old Range
Developed Bulls Will Be
Offered at Auction**

“Nature is smarter than all of us.”

Tom Lasater

A recent article written by Trent Loos is quite intriguing. Loos is a writer and radio personality whose “Loos Tales” livestock and meat-related commentaries are broadcast on the Brownfield Radio Network. Trent wrote a story entitled “ALASKA TRIP A GLIMPSE INTO CATTLE ‘EVOLUTION’ IN ABSENCE OF HUMANS” about his experience in viewing a herd of cattle on the Alaskan island of Chirkoff, located 400 miles southwest of Anchorage.

The story starts in 1888, when the Russian government placed approximately 300 head of native Russian cattle, fox and parka squirrels on the 33,000-acre island in hopes of establishing a self-sustaining penal colony. Although the colony never developed, the cattle survived and today are a picture of 100 plus years of “survival of the fittest” in that environment. According to Trent, over 1,000 head of cattle are currently on the island. The cattle are being removed so that the island can be devoted to being a bird sanctuary.

Trent’s observations of the phenotype of the cattle on the island are very interesting. According to his observations, the cows weighed about 1,200 pounds each and approximately 70 percent of them had calved within 45 days of the time of his visit. The new calves from these cows were weighing roughly 45 pounds at birth. The mature bulls he estimated to be weighing in the 1,600 to 1,800 pounds range and their body type resembled that of buffalo with deep rib cages and not much hindquarters. The most impressive trait according to Trent was the udders of the cows: picture-perfect, every one of them.

If you would like to read more about these unique cattle or see a picture of them the following is the web address for Trent Loos article: www.meatingplace.com/meatingplace/DailyNews/News.asp?ID=10487

Trent’s article and his observations raise the following question. **How often do we select for levels of production or for specific traits in cattle that are contrary to what an environment would naturally allow them to produce?** How will applying this type of selection pressure affect other productive traits and affect the ability of the cattle to work in an environment with minimum inputs? What will be the results of selecting for a specific trait on other traits? The answers to these questions are varied and will differ with the environment and selection pressure being applied.

The Lasater Beefmaster herd has been closed since 1937, substantially more than half the time the cattle on Chirkoff Island have survived and existed (114 years). The breeding program on this ranch as been described as “survival of the fittest where we define fit.”

Good udders are an important part of the definition, and natural selection is the method used to achieve that and all other goals. We did not genetically try to design the perfect udder. Instead, we simply required that each cow produce abundant milk (as expressed through weaning weights) and that she handle the milk delivery by herself. Every cow that was ever assisted was eliminated from the herd. The result of natural selection? One experienced animal scientist stated that he did not know of any other herd with udders like the ones he saw on this ranch.

Lasater Beefmaster® Genetics have been selected for the *Six Essential* traits within the boundaries our environment has set with minimum intervention. The results are cattle that are functional and productive while avoiding the extremes and pitfalls that occur with selecting for the most recent trendy trait.

BIOMIMICRY

Biomimicry is the term given to a new science that studies nature's models and then imitates or takes inspiration from these designs to solve problems. Janine M. Benyus the author of a book entitled Biomimicry, refers to the science as "innovation inspired by nature." At the foundation of biomimicry is the process of observing what occurs in nature and then seeking to copy it.

Amazing examples of design by the intelligent Creator are clearly evident all around us. Take for example the silk in a spider web. The silk ounce for ounce is five times stronger than steel and is waterproof. The silk is can also be eaten and used by the spider to build a new web from an old one. Man made material with these properties would be recognized as an amazing invention. The spider produces it daily all from a diet of flies and other bugs. Quite a feat! If only man could conceive how to produce products with these qualities from such simple material. Even with all the technology and information available, it is still quite clear that nature is able to do things and produce products that we can only dream of.

We would be wise to observe natural processes and learn how to utilize them.

Tom Lasater implemented "biomimicry" into his philosophy of cattle breeding and ranching long before the concept became popular or anyone had coined the term. He believed that working with natural processes rather than fighting against them was the best way. Tom observed the native prairie and its inhabitants and sought to raise cattle that would be adapted to this environment.

One example of selecting for adapted cattle is the mothering and protective instinct that is selected for in this herd. Cows and heifers are calved out on the range and are expected to protect their calves from coyotes. Those that fail to do so are removed from the herd.

At the Lasater Ranch, the breed of cattle Tom Lasater developed continues to be refined under the parameters of the Six Essentials that he put in place. The results are productive, functional cattle that work in a range environment with minimum assistance.

Females and pairs available now at private treaty

"In culling every female that fails to wean a calf every year, regardless of the reason, we lose some good ones but we get all the lemons."

Tom Lasater



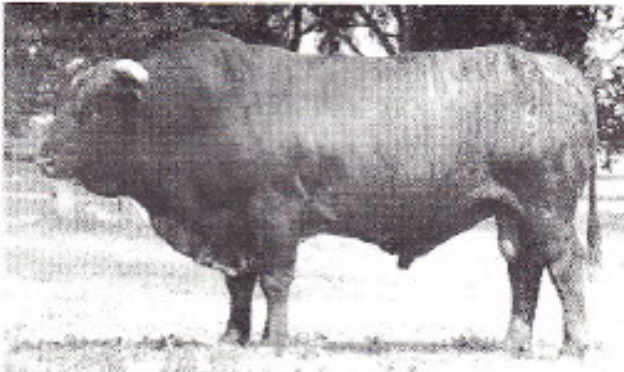
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We select cattle to work for us, so we know they will work for you.

Lasater Beefmaster 7256



Sire: Lasater 2569 Dam: Lasater 0792
WWT 772 YWT 994 Mature Wt. 2076#

Lasater Beefmaster 7256 is one of the most complete herd sires to come through our program. The dam of 7256, Lasater 0792 is still in the Foundation Herd producing at age 12. This bull is her 6th calf. As of the summer of 2002, she had produced 11 calves consecutively. In the 2000 breeding season, 7256 was the most prolific herd sire of the bull battery, leaving 53 progeny identified through DNA testing. His offspring have performed exceptionally well. Twenty-five bull calves from the 2001 crop had an average weaning weight ratio of 108 in our herd. Currently, 7256 has several sons in our herd sire battery. Look for his sons in our 2003 production sale.

**54th Annual Field Day and Production Sale
September 9 & 10, 2003 Matheson, Colorado**