



Town Creek Farm

The GRIT

WINTER 2015

Volume 3, Issue 1 • Published by Town Creek Farm, West Point, Mississippi • Brangus and Ultrablack



Milton Sundbeck

The Grit welcomes your inquiries and feedback. The Grit is published by Town Creek Farm, West Point, Mississippi.

Town Creek Farm

Milton Sundbeck, Owner

Office: 32476 Hwy. 50 East
West Point, Mississippi 39773
662.494.5944

www.TownCreekFarm.com

Joy Reznicek, President
205.399.0221

Joy@TownCreekFarm.com

Tommy Sanders, Ranch Manager
662.436.6175

Tommy@TownCreekFarm.com

Ron Flake
662.494.1577 office
662.509.2233

Ron@TownCreekFarm.com

South American Representative
Ing. Agr. Federico Maisonnave
(011) 595 981 362 898

Skype: federico.maisonnave
Maisonnave.Federico@gmail.com

Total Commitment



Since 1993

JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST TO RECEIVE THE MOST
UPDATED SALE INFORMATION AVAILABLE.
EMAIL INFO@TOWNCREEKFARM.COM
TO JOIN OUR FOLLOWING.

A Good Foot Race

BY JOY REZNICEK

OVER THANKSGIVING I TRAVELLED TO TEXAS to spend time with family. Dad celebrated his 90th birthday; our family held a ranch meeting and we ate like scavengers on Thanksgiving Day. My sister, Lea, and I got up every morning and ran. She's a good athlete. Better than me. But as years passed I seemed to excel at distance running. We've run several half marathons together and I've been the one who's kept her running. She fooled me this time. On our morning runs she kicked my butt. I kept pace, but with a lot of huffing and puffing.

I left Texas with a renewed sense of purpose. I vowed I would never let this happen again. Growing up with six brothers and sisters allowed me to develop my competitive gene at an early age. I can't seem to rid myself of this annoying genetic flaw even as I get older. Since returning home from Texas, I run with a running app to log my pace and mileage. I've shaved 20 to 25 seconds off my mile splits. It's not easy. In fact it's darn hard.

As I thought of this journey, I was reminded of how complacent we can become in life. With only a dog or two by my side on my pre-Thanksgiving runs, I slowed to a turtle's pace and was no longer using a running app to remind me of my stride. It was good enough to get by and to stay fit, but required no extra effort.

Every once in a while we need a jolt. Or in my case, a good foot race. Humans naturally rise to challenges and we naturally become comfortable when times are good. By now you know where I'm headed. With calves bringing record prices, it is tempting for cow-calf producers to become complacent. Producers are enjoying unprecedented calf revenues with little effort.

Let us never forget from where we came. Basic cow-calf management practices such as weaning, castration, dehorning and vaccination have even more value at current pricing levels. Buyers are rewarding these practices to lower

their risk of death loss, a costly loss on today's pricing scale.

Some have called into question management strategies that call for culling open cows in our current pricing structure. I've read articles which challenge financial benefits of culling open cows in this market stating that it costs too much to replace cows. Let us not forget freeloaders are freeloaders no matter what the market. I was part of a cow herd in which we kept every heifer as a potential replacement for 10 years, yet experienced little to no growth. Only open or otherwise cull cows were removed from the herd. And then it happened. Wheels caught traction and growth began to occur at a rapid rate. Our diligence to culling open and unproductive cows changed our cow herd. If fertility is not highly heritable, then infertility is. The most profitable cow herds, in good times and in tough times, are herds that have fertility as their highest priority. Don't let calf revenues cloud your principles.

Finally, give due respect to Brangus replacement females. Using high quality Brangus or Ultrablack bulls will always give producers unequalled opportunities to capitalize on replacement heifer markets. In this market environment particularly, quality Brangus heifers can be marketed at premiums as weaned calves separate from steers or as yearlings or bred heifers. This unique marketing opportunity could be the best we've ever seen and will be for three to five years. If possible, reap rewards in your own operation and keep these replacements in your herd. If you've been using high quality Brangus and Ultrablack bulls from reputation breeders and applying culling pressure on fertility, these girls will take you far into the future.

I believe we owe it to consumers to continue to perform at the top of our game. We are asking consumers to pay more for beef than ever in the history of beef production. These are unprecedented times. Let's not take shortcuts because we can. Let's not slow our pace or take a breather. Our best insurance for high markets is to provide consumers with quality eating experiences so they will come back and buy more beef no matter what the price.



Powerful Markets Boost Town Creek Farm's Fall Sale

"THE TOWN CREEK BRANGUS BULL SALE WAS AN OVERWHELMING

confirmation of our decision to resurrect the Cow Creek Ranch Brangus genetics that Joe and Joy Reznicek so diligently crafted for nearly three decades," says Milton Sundbeck, Town Creek Farm owner. "An outpouring of support from previous and new customers made our sale an incredible success. I am eternally grateful for all the cattlemen and their families who participated in the sale. We have a powerful crop of young, up and coming bulls for our 2015 sale. The whole Town Creek Brangus team is excited about their future and developing them for our fall sale."

Buyers and bidders from 11 states and Paraguay, South America, engaged in the fast pace sale that saw 127 Town Creek Farm bulls average \$6890 and 288 Town Creek Farm customer-owned commercial bred heifers average \$2842. The two sales grossed \$1,693,450. Doak Lambert, Texas, was the auctioneer.

Thirteen bulls sold between \$16,000, the sale high, to \$10,000. Each of these bulls was sold to repeat Town Creek Farm customers from the states of Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana and Oklahoma. Buyers appreciated the proven genetic packages of moderate frame, muscle mass and thickness in these herd bulls.

In the next pricing tier, 15 bulls sold from \$9500 to \$8000. Again, repeat Town Creek Farm customers took these 15 bulls to their home states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana and Oklahoma. The balance of the bulls in



the sale all sold from \$7500 to \$3500 to progressive commercial cattle operations with only 10 bulls selling for less than \$5000.

Town Creek Farm held its second Commercial Bred Heifer Sale, which is a continuation of the 18-year running Cow Creek Ranch Commercial Bred Heifer Sale. Heifers were sired by Cow Creek Ranch bulls and bred back to Cow Creek Ranch and Town Creek Farm bulls.

Customer-owned heifers were offered by Williamson Cattle Co., ranching in Faunsdale, AL, and Okeechobee, FL, and a 17-year consignor to the Town Creek Farm and Cow Creek Ranch Sales; River Oaks Farm, Searcy, AR, and Black River Brangus, Monterey, LA, 16-year consignors; 15-year consignor, CP Bar Ranch, Holcomb, MS; 10-year consignor, Megehee Cattle Company, Macon, MS; along with six-year consignor, Montgomery Farms, Moulton, AL; four-year consignors Lazy MM Bar Farm, Tylertown, MS and Gunsmoke Ranch, Union Springs, AL; and second-year consignor, B&B Farm, Linden, AL.

Shadows and Lights of 2015 South American Beef Markets

BY FEDERICO MAISONNAVE, TOWN CREEK FARM, SOUTH AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE

ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, PARAGUAY AND URUGUAY ARE WELL KNOWN as cradles of the world wide soccer industry! Soccer is a passion. There are millions, yes, several millions of kids with talents and dreams. They jump up from their beds every morning striving to do their best in local team practices day after day. Many don't even have adequate footwear, but they simply don't care. It is a passion!

Every single beef producer in these same countries has the same attitude for beef cattle, no matter which side of the border. The fact that these cattlemen have outstanding environments on 80 percent of their lands to run cows year round, on grass, makes it much easier to produce beef. Above all, it allows them to produce low-cost lean beef in a very efficient way. You mix that with passion and attitude, and you have tremendous results. You have strong, long-term sources of the most desired red protein today, beef. Together, these four countries manage about 260 million beef cows and have some of the only herds still expanding. They have not stopped growing.

Let's take a closer look at their industries and perspectives for 2015. The main two threats these countries have is the Russian market and their own economies. What will their currencies do compared to the US Dollar and currencies of their main markets? 2014 ended with record exports for Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil at record prices per ton of beef exported. Russia played an important role as main consumers of these exports absorbing 50 percent of exports from Paraguay; 26 percent from Brazil; 22 percent of exports from Argentina; and about 10 percent from Uruguay. Remember, Russia is the third largest beef importer in the world.

With the international oil price budget at \$60 to \$80 per barrel for two to three years (main gross income for Euro-Asiatic countries), Ruble devaluated up to 50 percent, and economic-trading blocks with Europe; United States, Australia and others will make it difficult for Russia to be an important buyer in our region and to repeat the outstanding past years. In fact, several CEOs of large world packing plants are already stating that Russia will offer 20 to 30 percent less for protein than in 2014. Russian government has already confirmed tonnage of lean, cheap red protein with four buffalo killing packing plants from India.

Brazil has strong internal markets that compete with their exports head to head. This, and the fact that the government is devaluating their currency (more than 30 percent last year), sets up for record prices on beef again this year. China's huge market is opened up to them again so there is a likely chance that they will not be affected by the Russian crisis from a demand standpoint.

Paraguay exports 70 percent of beef it produces. Last year Russia purchased 50 percent of Paraguayan exports. It looks like its market success will depend on how fast Paraguay finds new destinies that pay as much per ton as Russians were paying last year. Their markets are not opened to China, US or EU.

Uruguay is safe and sound. They have been working on a country branded product for the past 10 years. They operate with whole herd traceability, good genetics and internationally it's considered one of the safest sources of beef in the world. Uruguayan beef has established itself in the most sophisticated markets and it's one of the countries that have access to top money for their beef. In fact, last year they were able to increase the price of ton of beef exported by more than 10 percent than the previous year.

Argentina has to be treated as a separate case. Their internal policies have not helped beef production at all. During the past 10 years they had reduced their beef head count from about 50 millions head to a little more than 30 million today. In spite of the fact that Argentina has high quality beef, the government has literally shut down their export markets in order to keep more beef inside the country to sell as cheaply as possible. That strategy didn't work and ranchers slaughtered several millions females as a direct consequence. Nobody knows what the government will do in 2015, but there is a high chance that new people will be driving the politics after next elections in October. So horizons could be clearing out for them.

The important factor about these countries is that they keep the cost of production very low. They have attitudes for survival and attitudes to move forward every day. So despite the shadows and lights they walk through, they will always make a profit in the beef business.



Real World Forage-Based Cow Herd

BY TOMMY SANDERS

EACH DAY AT TOWN CREEK FARM WE STRIVE to improve our cattle operation. It is our goal to have a cow herd that is uniform in type, and uniform in their production. This, to me, means an 1150 to 1200 pound cow that is moderate-framed, easy fleshing, fertile, breeds in a 65-day season, has a calf unassisted and brings it to the pens weighing 600 to 650 pounds on a forage-based diet. And she does this for 12 plus years. We could push for more growth, more milk, etc. But more or maximum production usually comes with more costs.

In many purebred herds you find that environments have to be changed to achieve desired results. Here at Town Creek Farm we are working to have a cow herd that fits our environment. We achieve this with genetic selection and culling animals that don't work. Our bulls are grown out and managed like our cows, on a low-energy, foraged-based diet. Again, we could push them harder to achieve higher marbling scores, higher yearling weights, and higher growth EPDs, etc. But, what good are they if they can't hold up and get your cows bred in a forage-based program.

We are currently experiencing good markets for our calves and low feed costs. How long this will last is anybody's guess. But we know it won't last forever. So, now is the time to select cattle that are adapted to a forage-based system so you will be ready when these markets shift to lower prices and higher feed costs. A forage-based cow herd allows you to survive the bad times and thrive in the good times. Remember, if you don't survive the bad times, you won't be around to thrive in the good times.

We hope to see you the third Saturday in October at our annual bull sale. You won't find bulls with 1500 pound yearling weights and growth EPDs in the top 10 percent of the breed that sire slow maturing, heavy milking, huge inefficient females. But, you will find moderate framed, easy fleshing bulls that are genotypically alike with moderate EPDs that come from a real world forage-based cowherd that will sire offspring to allow you to survive the bad times so you will be around to thrive in the good times.

May 2015 find you in tall grass and another great cattle market.



Fall pairs run on grass with no hay until January 2015.

JEFF REZNICEK HAS BEEN NAMED TO THE 2015 CLASS OF AMERICA'S BEST YOUNG FARMERS AND RANCHERS. The program is sponsored by DTN/The Progressive Farmer. Reznicek was recognized for his outstanding contributions to the cattle industry and for his work to sustain the 2,350-acre operation he manages.

Jeff is the nephew of the late Joe Reznicek and operates Cow Creek Ranch, Aliceville, Alabama, with his aunt, Joy Reznicek. Jeff and Joy have transitioned Cow Creek Ranch into a new business entity. Operating today as Reznicek Ranch, LLC, the ranch is devoted to high-quality registered Brangus genetics, premium cattle consulting services and sustainable pasture management.



Town Creek Farm

Brangus & Ultrablack Bull Sale and Commercial Bred Heifer Sale West Point, Mississippi

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2015 • 12 NOON

150 Town Creek Farm Brangus & Ultrablack Bulls

Practical, functional bulls developed on a high roughage forage-based ration in 40 to 50 acre traps. Sound footed, problem-free bulls guaranteed fertile and reproductively sound. Largely Cow Creek Ranch based genetics.

300 Commercial Brangus Bred Heifers

Multi-generation genetically-tracked heifers sired by Cow Creek Ranch bulls and bred back to Cow Creek Ranch and Town Creek Farm bulls.

Bulls Sell Trich Tested • Johnes Free • BVD PI Tested



Efficiency Testing Underway for Town Creek Farm Bulls

“WE WANT TO PASS FEED EFFICIENCY ON TO OUR BULL CUSTOMERS. Our job is to prove genetics in order of importance to that of commercial cattlemen, says Town Creek Farm’s Joy Reznicek. We know efficiency ranks very high on their lists.”

In December 2014, Town Creek Farm began testing its first group of sale bulls at nearby Mississippi State University Prairie Research Station. Using electronic identification, the system is able to track every pound of feed each individual animal consumes during a 50 to 55-day period. From that data, Town Creek Farm can accurately determine which cattle gain efficiently, which are less efficient and require more feed for a pound of gain. Identifying animals that have lower maintenance requirements (energy requirements for normal metabolic processes) can have a dramatic effect on reducing feed and forage inputs.

“What we’ve seen at this juncture is that there is a wide variance among bulls in daily consumption of feed. Average consumptions are varying by as much as 15 pounds per day. Even with lower feed costs, that’s huge cost savings. If we find similar growth performance and ultimately carcass characteristics among these bulls, these findings could represent significant savings for our program and for our bull customers,” says Reznicek.

From a cow perspective, research indicates that when comparing high-efficiency cows to low-efficiency cows, there is no impact on breed-back, birthweight, milk production or weaning weight. The only difference is amounts of feed they consume. We all know which cows we would like to have in our pastures.

GrowSafe systems measure individual animal feed intake, feeding behavior, and feed efficiency. GrowSafe feed intake systems are a series of feed bunks electronically linked to a computer and software system that continuously monitors feed present in the bunk. Each bunk is restricted to one animal at a time. Each time an animal enters a bunk, its electronic ID tag is recorded as well as the feed consumed and the time spent at the bunk.



MISSISSIPPI STATE LIVESTOCK JUDGING TEAM again lent helping hands during Town Creek Farm’s fall sales. Bret Crow serves as team coach and is instrumental in shaping futures of team members. “They will learn to make quick decisions and defend them with logic. They will learn valuable communication skills and will learn to work with others to achieve a common goal. That’s the beauty of this great program, we teach skills that can be used in any walk of life! I feel confident that many of these students will make a mark on the livestock industry in their futures as well, and as you know, it’s a profession dependant on an aging population. I see a real need to promote programs like ours that encourage involvement from youth in our industry. They will continue to “carry the torch” to move the livestock business forward by building on the foundation that folks like yourself have put into place for the next generation,” says Crow.



TOWN CREEK FARM CUSTOMERS FEATURED IN LANDSCAPES MAGAZINE. Crystal and Rodney Walker’s hearts are in agriculture. As agricultural entrepreneurs, the Walkers, owners of Walker Lands and Cattle were spotlighted in the Winter issue of *Landscapes* magazine. The foundation of their operation combines innovation, technology and diversification. The Walkers have converted their entire cattle identification system to radio frequency identification (RFID) tags. On a herd visit to Walker Cattle, located near Lineville, Alabama, Rodney used his smartphone to provide all information that I requested on cattle we were viewing. Rodney uses an electronic reader wand to scan RFID ear tags chute-side, which means his pen and pad can fly out the window. This technology provides many options including avenues to collect carcass data after calves are harvested. Their hopes are to someday soon see this technology used from gate to plate.

In addition to running several hundred head of Brangus and Angus commercial cows, many originating Town Creek Farm and Cow Creek Ranch Commercial Bred Heifer Sales, the Walkers are one of the southeast’s leading Gooseneck trailer dealers and are distributors of Mix 30 Liquid feed and its storage tank and feeder accessories.

Rodney’s son, Jason, a recent graduate of Auburn University, has returned home to work aside his family. Jason has started a small registered Brangus herd and is a Bull Production Partner (BPP) with Town Creek Farm.

To learn more about the Walkers, go to WalkerCattle.com.



Town Creek Farm spring yearling bulls on GrowSafe feed efficiency test.

Town Creek Farm to Host International Brangus Breeders Fall Conference and Field Day

TOWN CREEK FARM TOGETHER WITH SOUTHEAST BRANGUS BREEDERS AND INTERNATIONAL BRANGUS BREEDERS ASSOCIATIONS (IBBA) will host the 2015 Fall IBBA Conference and Field Day on August 20 to 22

“We are very excited and honored that the International Brangus Breeders Association will have its Fall Conference at our ranch in Clay County, Mississippi. We plan to roll out the red carpet for both groups as well as the great Southeast cattlemen and their families,” says Milton Sundbeck.

Complete schedules and lodging information will be published this spring. The iconic event will be packed with education, business events, recreational activities and local culture. Mark your calendars.