

Country Properties - Just Right for Longhorns

By Michael Casey

If you live in the Country or just have a weekend hideaway with ten or more acres, then Texas Longhorn cattle may be a perfect way for you to enhance your enjoyment of your property.

Despite their imposing horns, Texas Longhorns are among the most gentle of all cattle. Yet, having been semi-wild for over 300 years, they are completely self sufficient and care for themselves very well when their owner is not around. Because of their natural hardiness and disease resistance, they require far less veterinary care than do other domestic animals.

In short, they make a majestic and imposing presence in your front pasture, they are fun to be around, they mow your fields for fire protection, and all the while they leave you to enjoy your quiet time in the Country just as you always have

Calving Ease

Texas Longhorns are well known for their calving ease. Studies have shown that 99.7% of all Longhorn births are natural, live, and unassisted. In part that is because their calves are much smaller than those of other breeds, which is why many commercial cattlemen use Longhorn bulls on their young heifers to assure a live and healthy mother and calf. You will never have to get up in the middle of the night to help deliver a Longhorn calf. They do just fine by themselves and leave it to you to enjoy the little one romping around the next day.

History

Texas Longhorns are descendents of the first Andalusian cattle brought from Spain by Christopher Columbus on his second voyage to the new world in 1493. For over 300 years they roamed wild throughout Mexico, making their way north to Texas and to California with Spanish explorers and missionaries in the 18th century. Over time they evolved into the hardy and adaptable cattle they are today. In California their hides and tallow comprised the State's first export product, bringing purchasing agents from England and New England as long ago as 1821 to gather those products for newly developing shoe, boot, candle, soap, and lubricant markets back east and in Europe. It is fair to say that the first fortunes created in California were made off the backs of these animals.

Texas Longhorns are Efficient Foragers

Harking back to their wild past, Texas Longhorns are very efficient browsers. They happily consume many weeds and other substandard pasture contents that other breeds avoid, thereby allowing their owners to pay less attention to pasture management. In the romantic cattle drives of the old west, Longhorns actually gained weight on the trail, eating whatever was available and efficiently converting it to lean energy.

Heart Healthy Beef

Texas Longhorn beef has nearly 30% less fat and 15% less saturated fat than any other breed of cattle. This is so because they differ physiologically from other cattle in that longhorns store their reserve fat in disposable organs such as the heart, pancreas, and kidneys rather than in the edible muscle tissue where most other breeds store it. Several cardiologists actually prescribe longhorn beef to their patients, noting that it is lower in saturated fat than chicken or turkey. Beef producers are crying for new products to compete with the better organized pork and poultry industries, and Longhorn beef is a natural product to fit modern day dietary preferences. When that market becomes exploited (and that day will come soon) owners of Texas Longhorns

can feel content knowing that their surplus animals (should they choose to sell them for beef) make a healthy consumer product.

Easy Markets

If your herd gets too large, it is always easy to sell excess cattle at the local sale barn. In addition, Texas Longhorn owners can sell calves, once weaned, as roping stock for rodeos and to roping clubs which can be found in nearly every western community. There is also a growing market for specialty Longhorn products such as jerky and sausage, and producers of these products are always looking for Longhorns to fulfill their needs. Finally, as more and more people begin understanding the ease of owning and raising Longhorns, owners may find that their neighbors may well be some of their best customers.

Enhance Your Property Enjoyment

Many owners of country property enjoy entertaining guests from nearby urban or suburban settings. Urban dwellers are always impressed by the color patterns and the horn spreads of these gentle, yet magnificent beasts, and most react with awe to the ease they find in walking among them in the pasture. It has been said that the Texas Longhorn is a walking piece of art handpainted by God. Their spectacular color patterns make calving time as exciting as Christmas - with everyone wondering what new rainbow colored calf lies behind the wrapping paper.

If you are like us, you'll soon wonder how you ever got along without these friendly animals gracing your front pasture.