

# A Commitment to Breed Improvement

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American Simmental Association*

Simmental breeders are working hard to provide the most complete Continental genetic package for the U.S. beef industry. You might ask yourself, what exactly does that entail? It is the pursuit of a genetic package that perfectly compliments British breeds, ensures ideal crossbred replacement females for commercial producers and promises an end product with the necessary balance of quality and cutability. No other Continental breed provides the combination of maternal excellence and carcass value that Simmentals bring to the table.

Just glance at the latest results from the USDA Meat Animal Research Center germ plasm project. You will find Simmental at or near the top among Continental breeds for almost every economically important trait ranging from fertility to efficiency to marbling. In fact, Simmentals rank first for most of the important traits evaluated.

The main reason SimGenetics compete so well among their competitors is the long standing breeder dedication to using genetic evaluation and cutting edge selection technology to constantly improve their product. Today's American Simmental cattle are easier calving, more moderate in terms of mature size and more maternally useful than at any time in history. In addition our long-running carcass progeny testing program gave Simmental breeders a head start, by providing the information needed to improve carcass and performance traits. Finally, our commitment to a multi-breed philosophy for genetic evaluation has given members and their customers the tools needed to manage heterosis and capture valuable genes available in the industry.

## **Heterosis**

If someone developed an injectable product that would increase lifetime productivity of a cow by 25 percent, producers would stand in line to buy it. They would run cows through a chute four times a year if necessary, just to take advantage of this huge increase in production. This product does not exist in a bottle, but it can be found in semen tanks and bull development yards everywhere.

It's called heterosis. Research has shown time after time that it works to the tune of about a 25 percent increase in lifetime cow productivity. It's no wonder the biggest trend in U.S. beef genetics is once again crossbreeding. With the huge potential that hybrid vigor offers to increase profitability, it is at the edge of negligence for seedstock producers to not encourage their customers to take advantage of it. Whether producers manage a breed crossing system or utilize composite seedstock to simplify the process, planned crossbreeding makes commercial cattlemen money!

One of the greatest changes to crossbreeding systems is the development of genetic evaluations that combine breed effects with individual genetic merit to predict production outcomes for commercial herds. With these advances, there is no need to consider anything but the best and most proven germ plasm available for your crossbreeding needs. Today's top end composite cattle are a good example. The days of simple crossbred bulls with questionable parentage and genetic value are soon to be gone. These seedstock are being replaced by designed composites that utilize the most valuable genes that complimentary breeds have to offer, in an easy to use package that retains heterosis and promotes profitability.

## **American Simmental Association**

During these good times in the beef business, the American Simmental Association (ASA) has been busy planning for the future. Throughout the past year, the ASA has implemented an inventory based reporting and registry system so maternal production can be more completely documented and evaluated. Over 80,000 females were enrolled in the program in its first year. In addition, the first dollar value index EPDs were released this year. These sophisticated selection tools represent the decision making process while emphasizing real dollar differences

between genetic options. The ASA also offers an All Purpose Index (API) and a Terminal Sire Index (TSI). Currently these are the most technologically advanced indexes offered by any breed and are backed by the first, largest and most reliable multi-breed genetic evaluation available in the beef industry today.

If you have more questions about today's SimGenetics and what they offer your business, visit our new web page at [www.simmental.org](http://www.simmental.org) or contact the association at 406.587.4531.