



CROSSBREEDING . . . SIMPLIFIED!

It is an absolute given that if you make your living in agriculture production then you will make more money by utilizing heterosis than by ignoring its value. There are hundreds, if not thousands of research reports repeated showing the value of hybrid vigor with almost no dispute. Its positive effects on reproductive traits, growth and production efficiency are well documented and substantial. Why then, if heterosis is such a phenomenal tool to promote profitability, did crossbreeding lose favor in the beef industry? Two primary reasons rise to the top of the list. First, managing the promoted crossbreeding systems of the 70's and 80's was difficult if not impossible. Second, the list of breeds offering little or no production and or product value to the US beef system was far too long. With no workable and simple system to maintain a useful and consistent level of heterosis in commercial herds and no plan to logically combine complimentary breeds and take advantage of each breeds strengths and information, "old style" crossbreeding was doomed.

Straightbreeding solved one of these problems. It was and is simple! Additionally, over time the commercial cowherd and the marketed progeny became more and more uniform in terms of breed composition and biological type and thus were easier to manage and market. That's great, except that once the hybrid vigor was bred out of the commercial cow herd, which takes 15 to 20 years, production efficiency and profits were bred out too. Remember that a crossbred cow produces on average the equivalent of 1 to 1.5 more calves during her lifetime than a straightbred cow! In addition there obviously is no chance of incorporating available and valuable breed complimentarity when straightbreeding so breed weaknesses become industry weaknesses.

Using SimAngus composite bulls offers the simplicity and ultimate breed percentage uniformity of straightbreeding, PLUS the undeniable value of retained heterosis to commercial cowherds. The more generations of SimAngus bulls you use the more similar your cowherd becomes in terms of breed composition and biological type regardless of the initial cowherd makeup. Also, one breed of bull can be turned out with any group of females just like in a simplistic straightbreeding scenario. By selecting genetically high value SimAngus bulls, black or red, commercial producers can also take advantage of the breed complimentarity of the highest value Continental and British gene pools available. SimAngus designed composites are a simple answer to a question that this industry got wrong the last time around. For more information on SimAngus, Simmental and the other products and services of the American Simmental Association, go to www.simmental.org.