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The Influence of Indian Cattle in the United States of America

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It has long been known that there are many cattle of Indian origin in the United States of America, but, details as to their importation, breeding methods, new types evolved etc., have not been generally available in the land of their origin and this note is an attempt to rectify the defect.

Indian cattle are generally referred to, in the United States, as "Brahman" cattle, a term which originated from an American misconception that Sradh er "Brahmini" bulls constituted a distinct breed, and this term is now recognised by the U. S. Department of Agriculture as a term to describe cattle of Indian Origin which have been selectively bred in the United States for beef purposes. They are also known as "Zebu" cattle, a term more commonly understood as a reference to Indian cattle in other parts of the hemisphere, especially Brazil. The Brahman breed is mainly the result of the influence of three of the major Indian breeds, the Kankrej, the Ongole, and the Gir, although other Indian breeds have also been used in its formation, especially Krishna Valley, Hissar - Hansi, Amritmahal, Scindhi, and possibly Malvi, Nagori and Hariana.

Importation: The first Indian cattle, to be brought to the shores of the United States of which there is definite record, were a Nagori bull and a Gir cow imported by Dr. James Bolton Davis into South Carolina in 1849. These animals were obtained by Dr. Davis in exceange for a pair of Angora goats, from England, where they had been brought for exhibition from India. This importation was dispersed before the American Civil War, but other small importations, mainly of bulls, soon followed, and these interested the cattlemen of the Gulf Coast region in exploring the possibilities inherent in these cattle.

The area along the Texas Gulf Coast between Houston and Corpus Christi had been an area most receptive to "Brahman" cattle, and this interest began with a crossbred bull, out of a white Shorthorn cow, whose calves, by their superiority over the existing cattle of the area, converted cattlemen to this new type of breeding stock.

Some of these cattle were purchased by Captain M. Kennedy for his Laureles ranch, and he also purchased crossbreds from Louisiana to upgrade his stock. Similar stock were also acquired by other breeders notably J. A. McFadden and his son AL. McFadden, A. H. "Shanghai" Pierce, J. M. Frost and Albert Montgomery. These men established important foundation herds, and in 1906, the Pierce Estate, in partnership with Tom O'Connor of Victoria, made one of the largest and most important influence for the establishment of Indian cattle in the United States.

Indian cattle had previously been exported to Brazil, where the "Triangulo Menirio" area of Minasgerais province became the focal point of Indian cattle breeding. Cattle sent from Brazil to Mexico and descended from these importations, were imported into the United States in 1924 and 1925. These cattle went mainly to existing Brahman cattle ranches, and did much to upgrade and augment the existing Brahman cattle of Texas and the Gulf Coast States.

The only subsequent importations have been one of bulls of Brazilian origin from Mexico in 1946 by a group of South Texas breeders, and importation of four Red Sindhi cattle by the U. S. Government the same year from the Allahabad Agricultural Institute.

Breeding Methods used in Development: The breeding methods used in the development of the American Brahman have been generally extensive, most breeders have had at least 50 cows and one or two bulls in their breeding herds, while major breeders have always maintained much larger numbers, and have therefore been better able to maintain more intensive selection. Significantly the majority of breeing bulls have come from the herds of the larger breeders. In the creation of new breeds, such as the *Santa Gertrudis* on the King ranch, thousands of cattle have been raised and selection has been most intensive, while resources of finance, and talent from the U. S. Department of Agriculture and Texas A. and M. college have also been liberally tapped. Breeds have also been developed by private breeders such as the Charbray (Brahman x Charollais — a French breed) developed mainly by Harl Thomas and the late Fred Turner of South Texas, and the Beefmaster, developed by the Lasater family of Falfurrias, Texas.

Creation of New Breeds and Strains: *The Santa Gertrudis* Breed: One of the largest, most prosperous, and almost fantastic ranches of Texas has been the King Ranch of South Texas. Established by

Captain Richard King in the middle of the last centuary, it is still managed by his descendants, and recently celebrated the centuary of its existence and development. Besides developing a breed of cattle, it has also developed its own strains of Quatar horses and through-breds, and has conducted extensive experiments with equipment for brush eradication.

The first cattle of the King Ranch were Texas Longhorns, decendents of the cattle of the Spanish colonists, and inured to brush and tick infested country by natural selection. However, they were poor in beef type and conformation, and so, were graded to pure-bred Hereford and short-horns bulls when these became available to the Western ranchers, towards the close of the last centuary. While these proved superior in market conformation, they were not satisfactory under ranch conditions, especially during the summer months, when they suffered from high temperatures of South Texas.

About 1910, Tom O'Connor of Victoria gave a black bull, a Brahman short horn first cross, to the King Ranch. This bull, was used for breeding, but out of male off-spring only a red bull calf "Chemera" was saved. His daughters, bred to short-horn bulls, proved highly satisfactory, and descendants of both the O'Connor bull and Chemera became the best range cattle on the King Ranch, as they developed into big boned, well fleshed cattle on grass pastures alone. The success of these animals led to a cross-breeding programme with 52 Grade Brahman bulls purchased from the Pierce Estate in 1918 and in 1919, one of these bulls, named "Vinotero" was bred to a cow of one-sixteenth Brahman blood, a descendant of the O'Connor bull through Chemera. The Produce of this union, in 1920, was the celebrated red bull "Monkey", who not only proved to be the best individual range bull and a prepotent sire but who was also destined in time to be the sire of the *Santa Gertrudis* breed.

Since Monkey was the most satisfactory individual developed on the King Ranch up to that time, a programme of close inbreeding to him and his sons, was then commenced. Monkey gave rise to over 150 useful sons, and died in 1932. He and his best sons were placed in single sire herds, his other sons, and later his grandsons, were placed in multiple sire herds. In this way the entire King Ranch herd was soon strongly related to this desirable bull. His male descendants were used to grade up the cross-bred Brahman shorthorn foundation. This breed building programme was carried out simultaneously with the normal commercial livestock operations of

the ranch, herds of "first cross" and "double cross" cows being bred to similarly bred bulls in operations involving thousands of cattle. Soon, the distinct type of the *Santa Gertrudis* breed, with uniform and distinct characters and a dark solid red coat, similar to that of *Red Sindhi*, developed in the King Ranch herds

In 1940, the *Santa Gertrudis* breed was officially recognised by the United States Government as a new breed of beef cattle. The breed took its name from the Santa Gertrudis Land Grant, originally conferred by the spanish Crown, on which the headquarters of King Ranch are now located. From the arrival of the O'Connor bull to its recognition as a breed was just thirty years, one of the most rapid developments in the formation of modern breeds of livestock.

In 1951, the *Santa Gertrudis* Breeders International, the official association for the registration of *Santa Gertrudis* cattle was formed at Kingsville with 166 charter members. The previous year, the King Ranch had the first of its now annual auctions, and animals of this breed are now found in many of the other States, as well as in Cuba, Colombia, Mexico, Hawaii, Australia, Brazil, U. S. S. R., and fifteen other countries. Registration is contingent on satisfaction of pedigree and inspection requirements, animals satisfying these requirements being classed either as certified or accredited. Produce even of already registered stock is still subject to inspection before registration. This is indicative of the high level of effort still being continued to improve the breed to greater excellence. The classification of breeder's herds is done by specially trained, paid employees of the association with full authority, rather than by a committee of breeders, as is usual with many associations. Certified pure bred animals are branded after inspection with the letter "S" while accredited (females only) are branded "S bar", in the presence of the official classifier, who follows the official standard of excellence, which describes "desirable", "permissable", "objectionable" and "disqualification" features for registration. As the breed is still developing, registration of superior animals from accredited stock is still permissable, i. e., the registry may be described as open.

The composition of the *Santa Gertrudis* breed of tody is about three-eighths Brahman and five-eighths Shorthorn, this being considered the most satisfactory combination for tropical beef production in the breed.

The Charbray breed : The *Charbray* is a cross of the French Charolaise or Charollaise breed with the Brahman, and animals acceptable for registry "must have at least one-eight Brahman, or not more than one-fourth Brahman to qualify for registration" in the American Charbray Breeders Association which was established in May 1949 at Weslace, Texas.

The breed was mainly developed by Harl Thomas and Freed Turner of Weslaco, who crossed registered Brahman cows with Charolaise bulls to produce $\frac{1}{2}$ Charolaise $\frac{1}{2}$ Brahman cows. These cows were bred to other Charolaise bulls and their offspring registered as *Charbray*. The $\frac{3}{4}$ Charolaise and $\frac{1}{4}$ Brahman cows were also bred to Charolaise bulls to produce $\frac{7}{8}$ Charolaise—$\frac{1}{8}$ Brahman cattle, and these animals were also registered as *Charbray*. The registry, like that of the *Santa Gertrudis* breed, is still open to acceptable animals of superior conformation.

This breed has only been developed in relatively recent years, and so, breeders are still working out a suitably standardized type, but are agreed in that they are striving for a large beef-type animal " that is an excellent grazer, a fast breeder and is easy to handle ". Grown cows weigh from 1700 to 2200 pounds and grown bulls from 2500 to 3200 pounds, the usual dressing percentage is from 60 to 65 percent. *Charbray* calves are usuallay born a light tan which bleaches out to a cream white in a few weeks. They have rapid growth and have been desired as veal calves, as they usually weigh 90 to 125 pounds more at weaning time than other beef breeds.

Charbray cattle have crossed well with other breeds and are now found in twenty six states of the U. S. A., Hawaii and five Latin American countries. Breeders are continuing their efforts in intensive breeding programme for raising the excellence of this breed to greater heights.

The Brangus breed : As the name implies, the *Brangus* is the result of a cross of the Brahman with the Aberdeen—Angus breed of Scotland. *Brangus* are large black, hornless animals of about three-eighths Brahman and five-eighths Angus in their constitution, and may be produced either by crossing " quarter blood " individuals with " half bloods ", or by crossing a three-quarter Brahman with a purebred Angus. *Brangus* are then being bred to *Brangus* to develop the breed and fix the desirable characteristics of this cross. The American Brangus Breeders Association was

organised at Vinita Oklahoma on July 29, 1949 with 54 charter members, and now has members in thirty eight states, Canada, Mexico, Venezuela, Cuba and other foreign countries. The breed association has as its purpose, the further development of *Brangus* cattle, and both registers of *Brangus* cattle meeting the conformation requirements of the Association as well as records of foundation stock being used in development of *Brangus* cattle. Clear Creek Ranch owned by Buttram and Son of Oklahoma city, Oklahoma, and Clear View Ranch owned by Ranmond Pope of Vinita Oklahoma, are among the foundation establishments of the breed.

The Beefmaster breed : The *Beefmaster* breed was developed at the Lasater Ranches at Falfurrias, Texas, and Matheson, Colorado, and has been now recognised as a new beef breed by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The breeding programme to develop the breed was begun in 1908, when the Texas Ranch became the first in its area to experiment in the cross breeding of the Brahman cattle. Emphasis was placed on the development of a breed which would produce a quick maturing heavy calf at eight months of age under range conditions with no supplemental feeding. It is also a rigid rule of the Lasater breeding herds that all *Beefmaster* females, beginning as two year olds, must drop, raise and wean an early calf each year or be dropped from the breeding herd. The *Beefmaster* has been developed from Brahman—Shorthorn—Hereford crosses, and while it is estimated that it contains about 50% Brahman "blood" the developers of the breed have not tried to use any particular level of blood as their objective, but have simply retained the best animals for breeding on the basis of disposition, fertility, weight, comformation, thriftness and milk production. All animals not displaying these six characteristics are culled, regardless of other factors.

There is no herd registry on *Beefmasters*, however, the name is copyrighted, and its use is authorised under a name franchise contract issued to breeders who purchase stock from the Lasater herds. *Beefmasters* are marked under a somewhat unique system known as " The Beefmaster Plan " with selection and delivery based on postmark priority of contract.

The Braford Cross : As the name suggests, the *Brajord* is the result of the Brahman—Hereford cross, and the resultant progeny are usually brindled or have the Hereford colouration.

Braford animals have good size and are well fleshed, but the registry association for this cross, the North American Braford Breeders Association, formed in 1948 at Bay City, Texas, is currently inactive as many of the breeders of this cross are commercial beef producers, and are content to use this cross for commercial production without trying to stabilize a definite type into the breed.

Braford cattle are found in the fairly large herds maintained by the Paddock Ranch Co., of Houston, Texas, and Savage and Sons of Bay City, Texas. Messrs. Coon and Culberson of Dalhart, Texas have also used this cross extensively in the past, the name "*Braford*" is believed to have been originated by Mr. Coon. Savage and Sons have bred *Braford* cattle for twenty five years, securing foundation Brahman bulls from the Pierce Estate and using Hereford cattle of Prince Domino breeding. They have emphasized quality and conformation rather than any color, and have tried to maintain a combination of half Brahman and half Hereford which they consider as being most satisfactory.

The Brahman breed: Last, but not the least, may be considered the *Brahman* breed. The various breeds of India that have been imported into the United Sates have not been kept separate, but have rather been crossed with each other and the results selected for a beef type. This was both due to the scarcity of imported females needed to keep the Indian breeds pure, and also because most of the early importations were bulls of various different breeds. About 270 cattle of both sexes have been imported, and of these, only 15 females and about 100 males have contributed to the *Brahman* breed. The Indian breeds predominating in the *Brahman* of today are mainly the *Kankrej*, the *Ongole*, and the *Gir*. Considerable progress has been made in selection for a beef type and many of the large ranches now have herds of considerable uniformity, but breeders are endevouring to develop still better types by continued intensive breeding policies. A difference of ideals in breeding policies has led to two associations for the registry of *Brahman* cattle. The American Brahman Breeders Association established in 1924, with headquarters in Houston, Texas, and the Pan American Zebu Association, established in 1948, and now in San Antonio, Texas. The two associations have registered, by 1955, more than a quarter of a milion cattle, making the *Brahman*, after the *Hereford*, *Angus*, and *Shorthorn*, the fourth largest beef breed in the United States. Registered *Brahman* cattle are now being bred in 40 states and 33 foreign countries, including Australia, Israel,

Madagascar, Rhodesia, East Africa, Philippines, Thailand, New Guiana, as well as most of the countries, of Central and South America. Transfers of *Brahman* cattle ownership in the registry association have shown a steadily increasing percentage to foreign ownership, indicating a growing export trade.

Both registry associations are open, and, besides descendants of already registered animals, approved females, of suitable conformation and at least 31/32 Brahman breeding, as well as animals of Indian breeds imported from Brazil or India may also be registered. However, animals from India or Brazil are not being imported at the present time as they are in areas which have diseases not found in the United States, and import regulations forbid any importations from such areas.

Besides the registry associations, there are a number of affiliated regional associations, which help in publishing *Brahman* cattle and aid in sponsoring local exhibitions and shows. There are also major show circuits for *Brahman* cattle in Texas, Florida, and Louisiana, and of all the shows, the San Antonio show, with nearly 200 Brahman cattle exhibited, is perhaps the largest. The large breeders are the principal exhibitors, due to the not inconsiderable expense of showing cattle on a show circuit. Enthusiasm for the breed is also stimulated through breed literature, Photographs, films, and models of desirable type Brahman cattle, and breed magazines, which give news of breeders, their cattle, result of shows and other pertinent information. Breeders and animals of note are often also interviewed or featured by daily newspapers and national magazines, the resultant publicity serving to popularize the breed.

Brahman cattle herds are also being maintained by educational institutions, and of these, and herds of Texas A. and M. College at College Station, Texas and Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge, Louisiana are particularly noteworthy. Experiments involving *Brahman* cattle are being conducted by many of the agricultural colleges of the Gulf Coast States, as well as the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Conclusion : *Brahman* cattle are now firmly entrenched in the United states, and have proved their ability to contribute to the animal husbantry of America and other countries lying in the tropical regions of the Western hemisphere. The new breeds created with the use of the Brahman influence are an indication of the tremendous

possibilities latent in these cattle, and the success that can attend their careful development. Many of our pure Indian breeds, with similar attention to selection and development can surely achieve the same uniformity and perhaps much greater excellence in the land to which they are native, and in which already exist, several individual animals of great merit.

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