

Longhorn History – Seven Original Families

Texas Longhorn Cattle come in hundreds of shapes, sizes, colors and horn configurations. These unique nature designed features have all been preserved by seven groups of people with seven different origins and seven different genetic bases. All seven are pure Longhorn, yet specific traits earmark each family with a special stamp. The true connoisseurs of the breed spot these characteristics and point with recognition concerning their virtues.

Prior to the perpetuation of the seven families the wild cattle herds of Texas possessed Spanish, Oxen and European blood. They were and are today a mix of breeds blended and refined by the elements of time, stress and survival.

At the beginning of the registry in 1964, a 100% visual inspection program was implemented to assure purity and type. Registered Longhorns today trace to a full ancestry verified for purity by this careful visual inspection.

Modern blood typing methods have determined a uniqueness of similarity in kinship among pure Longhorns and distant blood common to most other prominent cattle breeds. Longhorn purity cannot be determined by modern blood typing due to the lack of a data base on all families of pure Longhorns during the true time of breed origin.

The seven families were for the most part unrelated. They are Phillips, Wright, Butler, Marks, Wichita, Refuge, Yates and Peeler. All seven families originated in the early 1930's and before. All seven were separate from other herds with minimal exchanges of blood stock prior to 1932.

Today with over 200,000 registered, the breed itself has been preserved. Only two segments are nearly extinct. They are the corkscrew horn and the wine color factors. Near the Ft. Worth, Texas Stock Yards, the largest bronze monument in Texas has been erected with seven Longhorn steers to memorialize the seven pioneer Longhorn herds. The bronze was cast by world famous sculptor Terry Kelsey of Ramah, Colorado. Within the body cavity of the Phillips family representative are actual bones of the most famous Longhorn sire of all time, Texas Ranger. This work of art is titled "Texas Gold."

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Texas Longhorn History

Yates Family Longhorn History

YATES Cattle were bred during the lifetime of Cap Yates who passed away in the late sixties. Most of the original stock was dispersed by his family just after his death. The Yates herd was about 1500 head of rugged cows in the Big Bend area of West Texas, near Alpine. Mr. Yates felt that no breed of cattle offered the rancher what Texas Longhorns did in that harsh area of near desert. He did a great job of preventing outside blood from entering his program. He honestly felt any other blood was inferior to a small Spanish type rugged Longhorn.

The Yates cows have every quality needed to produce calves in the desert. They are structurally sound and good mothers. They are a true result of survival of the fittest.

The old Yates cattle as a group probably weren't impressive. Many were the smallest horned and most solid colored of the seven families. Today we see beautiful colored Yates cattle which were not a normal thing years ago. Yates cattle lovers have selectively bred for the families with the most color and there are some over 50" horned Yates cows. These are often very twisted as they get old. Some Yates cows are very "long headed," "sway backed," and have high tail sets. Of all seven, they represent the old traditional coarse small and rangy type. There were few truly magnificent Yates cows for horn. These few 50" cows in number probably were one in hundreds among Yates cows. The normal Yates cow has a small circumference and short horn tip to tip.

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