

Of cows, bulls, twins, and triplets

by Jim Cotton
Editor

Three's company. So states cow #157 from the A.F. Flint and Sons Ranch, Bard, New Mexico. This cow likes a crowd and isn't bashful about repeating her performance as she calves faithfully and in multiples to boot.

Cow #157 has produced eight calves in just 23 months (see box below for details). Twinning is unusual in the beef industry; triplets are rare. And, if 157's experience is any indication, the heritability of multiple births appears quite high. In fact, as Frankie Flint puts her history together, it's likely 157's first calving produced twins and the heifer calf first tattooed was lost for a bull calf showed up in tow and was eventually registered from this two-year-old. Flint suspects a mix-up:

"We may have brought the bull calf in and left a heifer out for coyote bait. I remember how foolish I felt when I sent a registration certificate back to the

Association to correct the sex.

"The deeper I go into her records, the more it seems like fiction," he continues. "My vet says such a cow will probably have multiple births every calving. Several years ago we had a cow that had five sets of twins in a row."

Flint reports the cow is a superior mother, knowing how to care for each and dividing her time among them. "About every hour," Frank observes, "she would nudge one up to suck. When it settled down, she would go to another."

A little about this prolific mama's pedigree. Her full name is Flint D-41 Dianthus 157. She calved February 21, 1981, and eventually posted an adjusted weaning weight of 566 pounds, 112 ratio. Her AHIR record shows an EBV score of 106 on six progeny. Her dam is a 1976 Pathfinder cow, her sire—also a Pathfinder bull—is Flints Desert Prince 4F1, born March 4, 1971.

He weaned at 603 pounds, ratio 110.

He was lot 17-1 in the New Mexico test at Tucumcari, 1971-72, where his pen set four records. Pen 17 was the highest gaining sire group, 17-1 the highest gaining individual at 3.97 ADG and also was distinguished by becoming the highest priced bull in the test up until that time. The pen also established the highest price for a pen of bulls in the test's 10-year history.

The bull 17-1 was purchased by an A.I. stud north of Denver and stood for a year there while being bred to a herd of his daughters for experimental purposes. He was a son of a Flint bull known as D-47 and one of eight sons in the Flint battery by this bull.

"We were looking at performance rather than bloodlines," Flint points out. "This created a lot of inbreeding, but we say if they won't stand inbreeding, we don't want them. It sure helps keep the genetics clean."

AJ

Calving record, cow 157

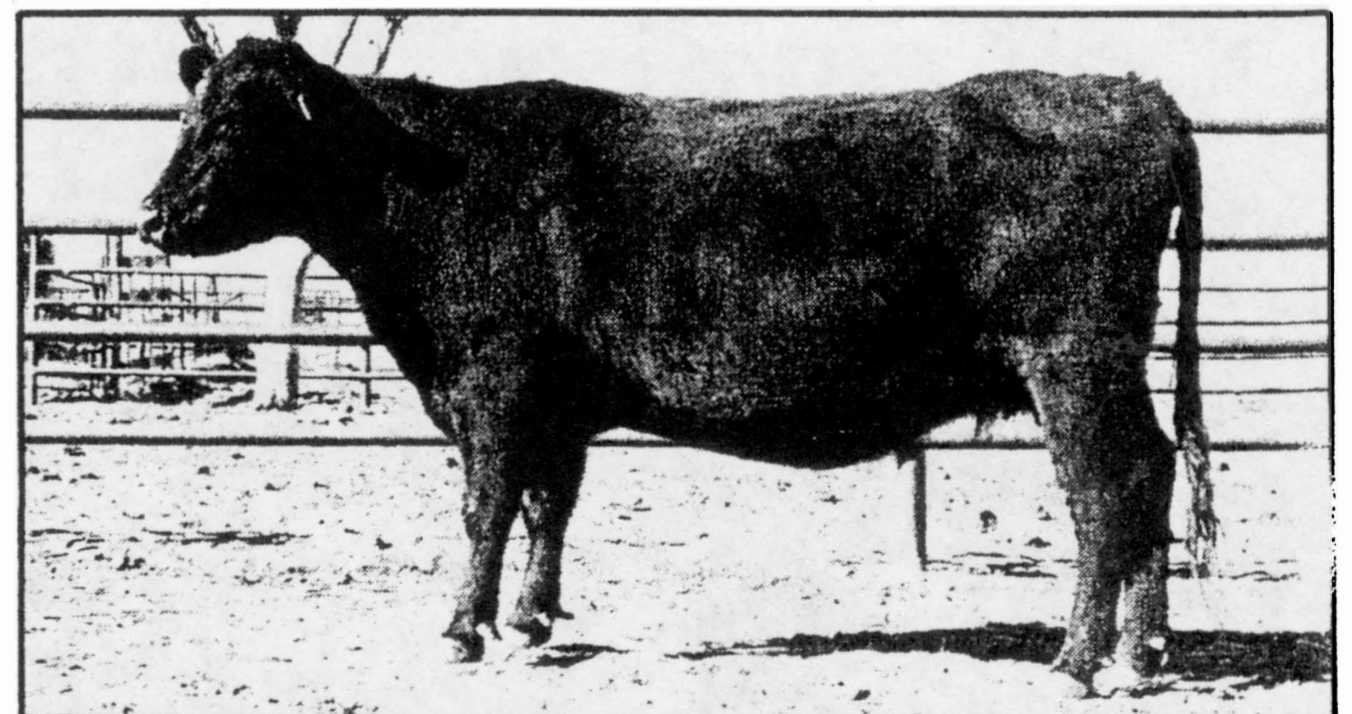
Bull, born 1-23-83, adj. WW 578, ratio 103. This bull was sold to State Senator R.P. "Bo" Thomas of Hendersonville, N.C., for use at his Round Pond Farm. Says Senator Thomas of the bull, Flint 123 Danthus 317:

"The bull has grown well, and his weight is estimated at 1,800 pounds. He is not exceptionally tall, but his length is greater than the average of the other high-quality bulls I have used in my program. . . . (He) is serving with 29 pretty good Wye background cows. His 21 calves are vigorous and at this early age appear to be of superior nature. Females appear to be very energetic and exceptionally feminine."

Twins, born 2-2-84, heifers with yearling weights of 771 and 800 pounds.

Triplets, born 2-9-85, two bulls and one heifer. Born in a large pasture under six inches of snow. "When found, all were cleaned up, nursed, and bedded down in a 50-foot circle."

Triplets, born 1-7-86, two bulls and one heifer, birth weights of 76, 45, and 50 pounds.



The celebrated cow #157 with her brood and also pictured three weeks before the event.