

A First--

Angus-Brahman F₁ Field Day

By John Crouch

"The mere fact that we are holding this event indicates that we are coming of age in the beef cattle industry," Dave Pingrey, president of the American Angus Assn., told a group of more than 400 commercial and purebred cattlemen gathered at the USDA Research Station in Brooksville, Fla., July 19. These cattlemen had come from eight states to attend the first Southeastern Cow Country Angus-Brahman F₁ Field Day.

The event made history—it marked the first time associations representing the Angus and Brahman breeds had pooled resources to present a program, one that dealt with the crossing of their respective breeds—the Angus-Brahman F₁.

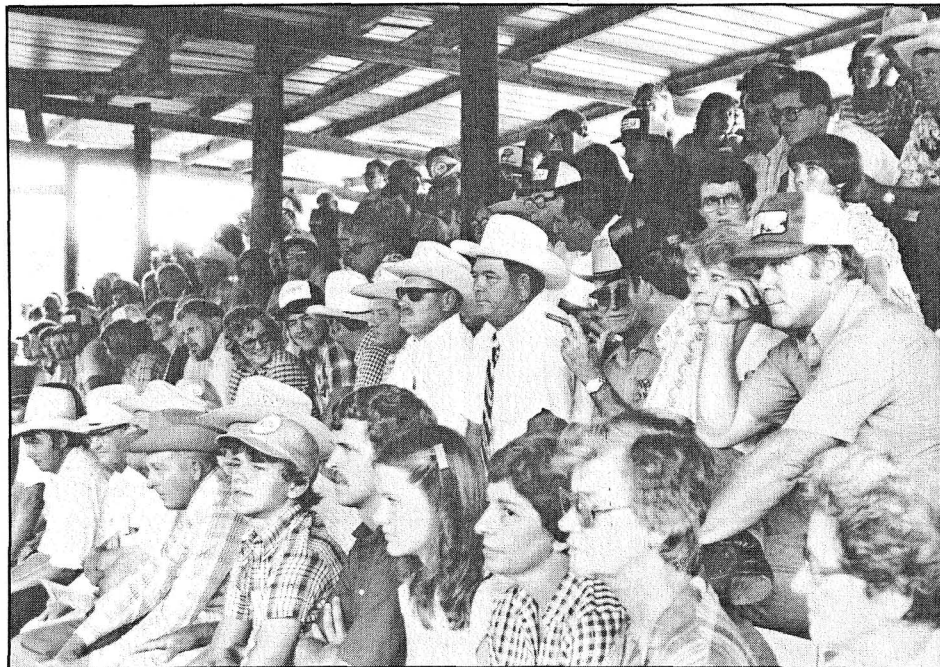
Wendell Schronk, executive secretary of the American Brahman Breeders Assn., told the group, "In order for any breed to be successful, its role in the total picture must be identified. The Angus and Brahman breeds have done this. We need to be aware of programs that will make our commercial operations more efficient. Research conducted at Clay Center, Neb., concluded that Angus-Brahman F₁ females weaned 10% more calves than did straight-breeds and they were 19% heavier at weaning." And Schronk stressed that in the F₁ program it is vitally important to use registered or purebred cattle in order to achieve genetic predictability.

Measurement Systems

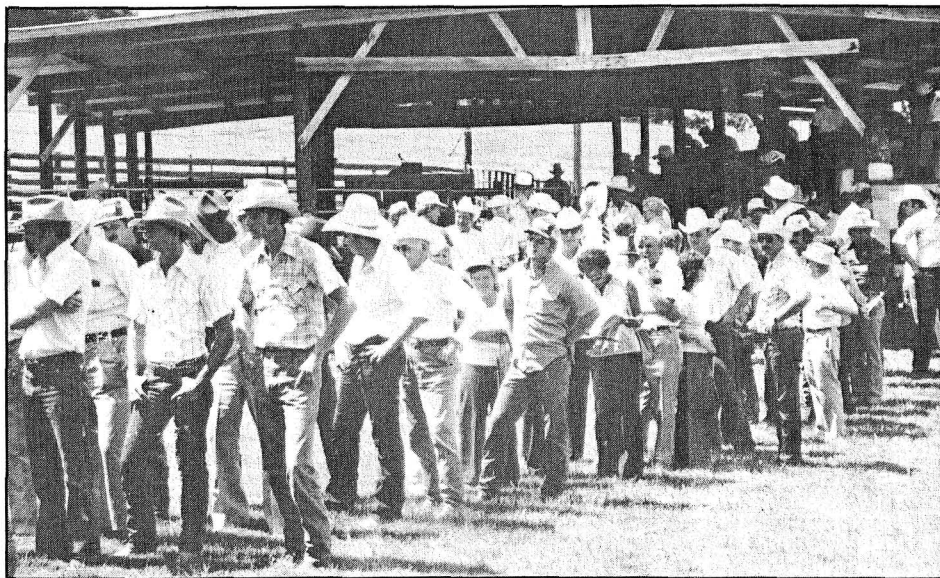
As part of the event, Pingrey explained Angus Herd Improvement Records, National Sire Evaluation and performance pedigrees, relating their value to commercial producers. "Historically speaking, cattle form has changed about every 15 years," he said. "However, functionality has not changed. We must find out what we want our cattle to do and then set up accurate systems to measure how well they do it. After these superior cattle are identified, we must breed and perpetuate them."

W.D. "Cal" Burns, director of the Brooksville Research Station, told the cattlemen, "The most significant aspect of this event is the fact that two breed organizations are combining their efforts in order to put on a meaningful program regarding profit in the beef business."

In his presentation "How Environment Affects Our Cattle," Burns cited research data gathered in an environmental study conducted on cattle transferred between Miles City, Mont., and Brooksville, showing that local cattle out-performed the non-local cattle in every trait. He also pointed out that differences in Montana were not nearly so great as in Florida. "In any part of



Part of the 400 people attending the first Southeastern Angus-Brahman F₁ Field Day.

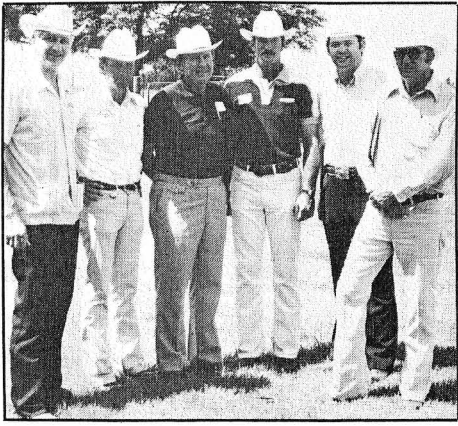


Lunch time.

the country," he concluded, "an F₁ program will only be as good as the genetics that are put into it. Cull cows cannot be used effectively. While an F₁ female is not a cure-all for all our problems, research has proven that she is a superior producer in the commercial industry."

Terminal Crossbreeding

"Terminal Crossbreeding" was another subject covered during the field day. Dr. Mike Milicevic, vice president of Sugarland Ranch, Clewiston, told his audience, "In order to achieve performance predictability in terms of size, color, conformation and ef-



From left are Randall Grooms, John Crouch, Dave Pingrey, Andy Tucker, Wendell Schronk and Cal Burns, some of the people responsible for the field day program.


iciency of gain, one should breed F_1 females back to purebred bulls."

Then Ralph Pelaez, Okeechobee rancher, explained, "In continuous crossbreeding, we select replacement females from our own program; therefore, we place great emphasis on fertility and weaning weights. All heifers are bred to Angus bulls. After their first calf, these females are divided into groups as to English or Brahman type, then bred back to opposite bulls."

"In this day and age, crossbreeding is no longer a controversial issue—it is an economic fact of life if a commercial cowman is to stay in business," said Dr. Randall Grooms of Texas A&M in summarizing the event. "A planned, systematic, crossbreeding program will enable producers to achieve in excess of a 20% advantage in weaning weight alone."

Size Question

Regarding the question of size in beef cattle, Dr. Grooms stated that "It's not important how big they get—but how quick they get there. While lots of emphasis has been placed on frame, the most important traits are still fertility, calving ease and then growth."

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Grooms commended the American Angus Assn., American Brahman Breeders Assn., Eastern Brahman Assn., Florida Angus Assn. and Georgia Angus Assn. for hosting the event. 

More of the crowd.

