Cattleman donates herd to Northeast

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News Editor

LAFAYETTE — After almost 25 years, Lafayette businessman and cattle rancher Bob Lowe has gotten out of the business. And he got out of the cattle business in a big way. Lowe donated his prize-winning herd of Simmental to Northeast State University in McNeese.

"I didn’t want to see the herd broken up," Lowe said. "Northeast has a strong agriculture department and they said they would keep the herd together for at least two years. "There’s lots of room up there for them."

The department has about 180 students, he said. What is special about this herd is the cattle themselves, Lowe said. The cattle were being raised on Fairview Farms.

The farm is actually three tracts of land: one south of Abbeville; one south of Perry and, one near Intracoastal City where the Vermilion River empties into the Gulf of Mexico.

Lowe said that when he became interested in Simmentals, he was aware South Louisiana was considered “Brahma Country” because most cattle ranchers and breeders were stocked with Brahmas. The Brahma cross resulted in calves that grew quickly, were tolerant of the heat and capable of withstanding such pests as deer flies, horn flies, mosquitoes, lice, round worms, live flukes and other parasites.

"The problem with Brahmas was that while they were great in spring, summer and fall, they shivered and shed weight when the winter winds began to blow," Lowe said.

Because of that, Lowe said he became interested in the Simmental. The original breed is from Switzerland and was suited for the high country, cold winters and spending the winters near barns filled with hay.

The cows donated to Northeast are the result of years of genetic engineering with the byproduct being a cow capable of outproducing other breeds in the amount of milk produced and meat available after slaughter.

One thing that was necessary was to breed the horns out of the cattle, Lowe said. "When you are transporting a lot of cattle with long horns, eventually you have one of them getting gored and that reduces their value," Lowe said. "Without the horns, you can transport them without the risk of them hurting each other."

Lowe said he will miss the daily visits to his herd, but added that officials at Northeast said he could come and visit at any time. "They really aren’t that far away. I’ll still have a chance to go and visit them."

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