

## "Building Blocks to Success"

Diego M. Gimenez, jr.

### WEST ALABAMA PUREBRED BEEF CATTLE SHOURTCOURSE

Most herds are managed with the intention of making a profit, contrary to the believe of some who think that a great number of purebred herds are only a hobby or a tax write-off. It is true that a number of wealthy people are purebred breeders, but in the majority of cases they too, like all of us, are seriously interested in producing the best cattle possible and in making lasting contribution, to the beef cattle industry and to agriculture in general.

Every potential or new purebred breeder should and must have goals as a breeder. It is also important to analyze the goals in term of available resources- Such as, capital "the sky is the limit", land, and skill or know-how- because these factors determine whether your goals can be achieved.

#### GOALS

1. What are the goals regarding long-range use of land-- Agricultural development or speculation?
2. What are the goals for the herd?

Purebred breeders and their operations can be divided into three rather broad categories. We know there is considerably overlapping and breeders are often in the processes of shifting from one category to another, the majority of breeders can be placed in one of the following groups.

a. **Seedstock breeders or master breeders.** This person is one that makes a lasting contribution toward improving the cattle of the breed of his/her choice. Not only produces superior animals, but also produces sires or families of females that will leave their influence on the breed for generation to come. They stay in business for a long time. Usually they are able to get the females or sires needed in their breeding program without worrying about the cost of the animal. They serve as an educational tool for the cattle industry. These individual will not give in to the momentary popularity of temporarily fashionable pedigrees or of a type of cattle.

b. **Purebred breeders** who supply the purebred bulls for the commercial cow-calf producer and the females for many new purebred breeders. They raise cattle good enough for the master breeder. The better breeder in this group are the

backbone of the commercial beef cattle industry, because the bulls produced in their herds influence the quality of stocker and feeder cattle produced in the commercial herds. A common ground of this group of breeders is that they are located near a market for their bulls for commercial use. Last but not least these breeders often go to the master breeders as a source of herd sires.

c. **Breeders of commercial cattle** who maintain a purebred herd that is large enough to produce the bulls and few replacement females for their own use. Often these producers are up grading from a commercial cow-calf program to a purebred herd. I do not know of any such producer in Alabama.

It is yours and mine responsibility to know the specific needs of your customers and to produce purebred registered cattle that can help to fulfill those needs. Other blocks for success are the following:

**Identifying your customers' need and producing for that market.**

**Committed to producing genetically consistent cattle.** The animals that you sell as "breeders" must perform consistently and raise calves that are consistent in their genetic make up. The purebred breeder that have committed him/her self to raised the cattle that are predictable and perform all the way to the packer will stay in business for many years.

**Integrity.** I do not have to stress its importance in this kind of business. Without it, it will not make any difference what you produce. Your integrity in collecting and reporting data, keeping breeding records, representing cattle as they are, standing behind your cattle, and making things right if they go wrong, all of them go toward building trust and confidence. Remember that it takes a lifetime to build a reputation and just one bad deal to destroy it.

**Pasture to Rail concept.** Will you go and see a carcass that one of your bulls produced. I hope that we understand that we are in the business to produce BEEF. As purebred producers we influence the kind a carcass that will hang on the rail. I strongly feel that no performance program is complete without feedlot performance data and carcass information, indicating the chance for profit potential.

Dedication, commitment and awareness that purebred cattle breeding is a long-time enterprise must be part of the foundation in order to be successful.

Other references and information that may help in goal setting.

- a. Aerial photograph with overlay showing fences and legend (pasture names or no. of acres, etc).
- b. Soil map with overlay showing fences, legend, etc.
- c. Breeding system
- d. Guidelines for selecting replacement females
- e. Guidelines for selecting herdsires
- f. Marketing system
- g. Feed nutrient requirement for each class of cattle
- h. Feed analysis report of hay and other available feed you will be using.
- i. Market news Reports.
- j. University agricultural publications on beef cattle
- k. Cattle industry magazines - Alabama Cattleman, Cattle Today, etc.
- l. Other selected reference books.