



SOUTH POLL NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2010

McGrady's to host South Poll Field Day and Sale at their Texas Ranch

In the year 1687, an expedition of the French explorer La Salle traveled along an Indian trace of the Bidai Indians along Lake Creek. This trace occupied the borderline between the piney woods of East Texas and the vast prairies to the west. There were so many buffalo here that the trace was named by the Spanish as "Loma del Toro" meaning "The Road of The Bull." In 1969, 282 years later, my father purchased the original 600 acres of our ranch along this mostly forgotten Indian trace. Long gone were the buffalo and the grasses and fertile soils that supported them. He set out to recreate a lush landscape by using the recommended practices of the time.

It's in the Genes...

By SPGCA President Teddy Gentry

The best genetics in the world can't overcome poor management from a lack of adequate nutrition. Overstocking is one of the costliest mistakes we make as producers.

I drive by pastures every day that have been overgrazed. The price in the end is in open cows and poor performance in the calves.

You really can't afford to try to make up this lack of nutrition by purchasing expensive food stuffs.

Also, my experience is that trying to add a little feed as a supplement to the diet of grass confuses the gut and is actually counterproductive to the animal's digestive process. The real choice, therefore, is to grow more grass or run fewer cows.

Culling is still one of the best tools you can use in building a real cow herd. Get rid of the problems. Given access to good grass and clean water every day, our cows should pretty well be problem free. Good genetics, plus good management, should equal healthy, productive, gentle, problem-free cattle that are pleasurable and profitable to be around.

As part of good husbandry, let's take care of our pastures and our animals so they can take care of us and future generations.

We encourage all cattlemen and hay producers to check out the benefits of sea salt for pastures and livestock. It could possibly be one of the best investments you can do for your pastures, livestock and the consumers who eat the beef.

I would personally like to invite each of you to our second annual South Poll field day and association sale on May 8 in Montgomery, Texas hosted by Tom and Toyah McGrady. Come join us to learn, teach and exchange ideas with some good folks.

If we move forward with honesty, integrity and good grass the cream will rise to the top.

We look forward to seeing y'all on May 8.

We planted hybrid Bermuda grass and fertilized. Unknown to us, the costal did not do very well on our tight clay soils and Bahia grass took over on the more sandy soils. So we supplemented our cattle to achieve the performance we needed. "Success" at last but it was a money pit. If I ever hoped to fulfill my dream of becoming a full-time rancher making a living off of my land things had to change. My perspective changed in a big way in 1986 after attending the Ranching for Profit School with a newfound hope that the soils and grasses could be restored back to the "Road of The Bull." I started to successfully eliminate inputs and increase production with my cowherd of Limousin-Angus cattle. But as with the Bidai Indians, life happened and I started over.

Knowing now that low input production from well adapted cows trumps any premium for breed or color, I wanted low or no input cows adapted to my hot and humid subtropical climate

that I could build a cow herd from. Cattle that would raise big calves to sell and heifers that

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Tom and Toyah McGrady on their ranch in Montgomery, Texas.

SPGCA Second Annual Meeting

The second South Poll Grass Cattle Association annual meeting and field day will be held on Saturday, May 8, at the ranch of Tom and Toyah McGrady in Montgomery, Texas.

Activities will kick off at 9 a.m. with Tom McGrady welcoming and introducing attendees to his ranch and explaining the activities the association has planned for the day.

Greg Judy, author and Holistic high density grazing rancher will give a presentation on his high density grazing operation and will lead a pasture walk in the afternoon. Dr. Jim Sanders will speak on what it takes to build a profitable and enjoyable cow herd. South African Holistic rancher Ian Mitchell-Innes will not be able to attend the field day as planned because of a fractured hip.

Association President Teddy Gentry will give an overview on the makeup and purpose of South Poll cows. Gentry is the founder of the four-way cross which includes Hereford, Angus, Senepol and Barzona breeds of cattle.

Gentry says the field day will be an opportunity to learn about progressive grazing methods and to see South Poll cattle as they fit into the efficient production of quality grass-fed beef. He describes South Poll cows as a "gentle, higher productive mama cow that is heat tolerant without having a Bos-indicus base."

Ranch owners Tom and Toyah McGrady say they would like to showcase South Poll cattle at the field day and intend to have a representation of cattle from all component breeds so attendees can get a better idea of how the South Poll came to be and what each of the four component breeds had to offer in the makeup of the South Poll.

A few select open heifers, bred heifers, cows and a few slick bulls will be offered at a Cowboy auction to be held at 1 p.m.

The organization will sponsor a silent auction throughout the day that would include semen on some of the best South Poll bulls in the breed and many other interesting items. Semen will also be sold during the day so bring your tank.

A lunch of grassfed South Poll beef will be served at noon. McGrady says the days activities should end at about 4:15 p.m.

Pre-registration for the annual meeting will be needed, with a \$50 per person fee being charged by the association for entrance to all the activities. Youngsters from 16 and under will be admitted free. Anyone registering after April 15 will be charged a \$75 fee. To register online go to www.southpoll.com under downloads or contact Lisa Sanders at 256-845-6851.

Registration forms and fees may be mailed to South Poll Grass Cattle Association, c/o Lisa Sanders, P.O. Box 681123, Fort Payne, AL 35968.

Executive board members of the association will hold their annual meeting on Friday afternoon at the ranch.

