

Favoring Fullblood Fleckvieh

A retired Doctor maintains a performance-oriented cowherd that is based on Fullblood Fleckvieh genetics.



The Moore family, back row, left to right: Austin Richardson, Bill, Trudy, Cindy and Dane Richardson. Middle row: Savannah Richardson, Maci, Andrea and Jack Moore. Front: Tinsley and Jackson Moore.



"MF Mr. Evan 14P," the bull sold to Kent Dollar for \$20,000.

By Dan Rieder

Retired from a career as a pathologist, Dr. Billy S. Moore of Huntsville, Alabama, continues to focus on strengthening a reputable seed stock herd of Simmental cattle. "We have had Simmental genetics at Moore Farms ever since 1974. We began by breeding a seven-eighths Simmental bull that a friend loaned to me, to some two-year-old, second-calf Angus heifers. That combination gave us a huge increase in weaning weights, and it was very apparent that was a pretty good thing to do," he says.

"After gradually converting to purebred Simmentals in the mid-1980s, I began to concentrate on the fullblood Fleckvieh strain in the early 1990s. Then, in 1999, the year I retired from my practice, I purchased a fullblood Fleckvieh South African bull, by way of Bar 5 Simmental Breeders of Canada, and have been capitalizing on those genetics ever since. He was one of the first South African bulls purchased by US breeders although Morris McKellar and Fred Schuetze may have been a little ahead of me," he said. "That bull, named Bar 5 Kalgary, has been heavily used in herds other than ours. I never brought him to the US and eventually sold him to Brazil, where he is now. We sold enough semen from him in just two months to pay for him."

Moore concedes that he was drawn to fullblood Fleckviehs because of their popularity and an existing worldwide demand. "You have to be able to sell what you produce and Fleckvieh have been very popular. I've had real good success with them, marketing genetics internationally as well as domestically," he reported.

Presently, he maintains a two-phased breeding program, with half of the herd consisting of a European Fleckvieh foundation and the other half comprised of South African genetics. "I also do some crossover blends between the two and that also works very well," he says.

"The primary reason I've stayed with the full South African cattle is that they almost always sold for a premium price above the other full Fleckviehs. That's changed a bit now, and they're about even in their selling price," he commented.

"MF Doorneve 36R," one of Moore's outstanding donor cows.



According to Moore, South African cattle have several distinct advantages, including outstanding feet and udders, more moderate frames and a bit more heat tolerance.

Recently, he began to incorporate an additional factor into his breeding program. "Polled fullbloods are the hot thing, which makes economic sense. I have located a high-quality, homozygous-polled, full Fleckvieh and at least half of my calves were sired by him," he said. "Several other quality polled bulls have also surfaced in the last couple of years."

Marketing Genetics

Moore Farms, which ran 80 cows not long ago, has since endured a herd reduction to 40 head, primarily due to prolonged drought that has gripped the region in recent years. "I don't think I'll rebuild the herd when the drought is over. I'm 71 and my health is good, but I think I need to keep our numbers about where they are. I just believe I'll keep working on those maternal pedigrees to produce donor-quality females," he explained.

Moore attributes much of his success to utilizing a wide range of marketing opportunities. He's sold a considerable amount of semen throughout the world and has teamed up with several fellow fullblood breeders to plan and carry out profitable, rewarding sales. "We have consigned cattle to fullblood sales like Kent Dollar's Quest sale in Arkansas, Buzzard Hollow in Texas, Dr. Mikel Davis's Magnolia Classic in Mississippi, the Houston International Sale and we usually hold a fullblood sale over in Georgia," he says. "I've consigned to the Alabama Simmental Association sale, and have sold bulls through the Alabama Beef Cattle Improvement Association's bull tests. One year, a full Fleckvieh bull that I raised topped the North Alabama bull test and most of my bulls have been consistently in the upper third."

A strong advocate of international trade, Moore has shipped live cattle and/or semen to Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Colombia and Canada.

Born to the Soil

A native of the Fayetteville, Tennessee area, Moore was raised on a small, diversified family farm, which remains in his family, although it is leased to a local farmer. The farm had Jersey dairy cattle, Angus beef cows, Duroc hogs, Hampshire sheep and 20 acres of row crops.

After high school, he enrolled in the pre-med program at David Lipscomb University in Nashville, earned his M.D. at Vanderbilt, also in Nashville, and did his residency at the Vanderbilt University Hospital, where he met Trudy, his wife of 46 years.

Following a two-year stint in the Navy during the VietNam War, he and Trudy settled in Huntsville in 1968, where he practiced medicine and raised cattle on the side.

"I had cattle in my blood and began raising them shortly after we moved to Huntsville," he recalls. "We bought our present 172-acre place in 1973, and built a house on it in '75. The first cattle we bought were 10 bred Angus heifers. After they calved, we introduced Simmental bulls and we've been loyal to the breed ever since."

They're the parents of two grown children, both of whom live within 20 miles of the farm. Their daughter Cindy, a substitute teacher, is married to Dane Richardson, a mechanical engineer for the Boeing Company, and is the mother of a son, Austin, 20, and a daughter, Savannah, 14. Their son, Jack is an orthopedic surgeon in Huntsville. Jack and his wife, Andrea, have three children: Maci, 14; Jackson, 11; and Tinsley, 8.

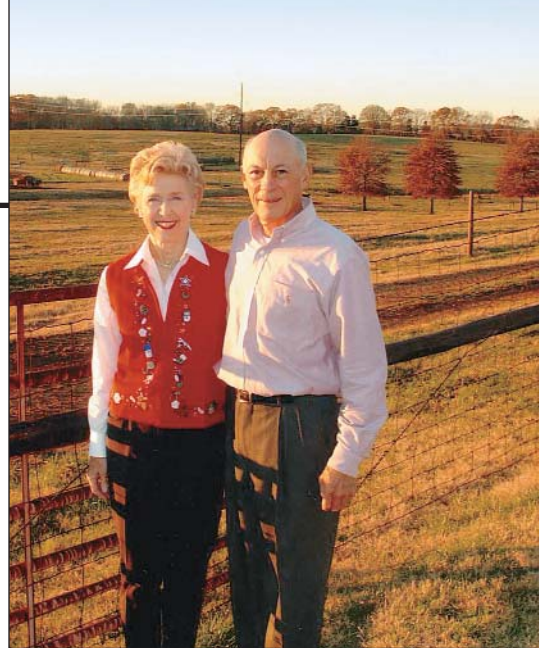
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Moore credits Trudy for her contributions to the cattle operation. “She was a city girl and it took me a while to convince her to live on the farm, but she always pitched right in, helping to haul hay or whatever else needing doing. When Cindy and Jack left for college, she went into the cosmetic business for 19 years before retiring,” he commented.

Active in their church, Billy and Trudy have taken mission trips to Scotland, the Caribbean and to Cuba, where they attended a Humanitarian Aid Conference.



Bill and Trudy Moore

Strength in Numbers

He has been deeply involved in beef industry organizations, serving as an officer or director for the Alabama Simmental Association, the Madison County Cattlemen’s Association, the American Fullblood Simmental Marketing Association, the Alabama Beef Cattle Improvement Association, and the North Alabama Bull Evaluation Center, among others.

“Fullblood breeders are a closely-knit group. I’ve made some real good friends in this business. We often sell together and support each other, even though we often compete for the same buyers,” he said. “Our Fullblood Simmental-Fleckvieh Federation includes some Canadian, South American, Australian and New Zealand cattlemen, which greatly widens our available genetics and markets.”

In 2004, the Alabama Cattlemen’s Association presented Moore Farms with its prestigious “Seedstock Producer of the Year” Award.

He is optimistic about the future of fullblood genetics. “New breeders are coming in right along and the full Fleckvieh seems to be the most popular,” he concluded. “Through extensive embryo transfer and careful scrutiny of A.I. sires, Moore Farms will continue to produce the highest-quality animals we possibly can in order to meet demand.” ♦