

ABBA INTERNATIONAL BRAHMAN PERFORMANCE SUMMIT
Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Center
Overton, Texas - May 5, 2017

An ABBA International Brahman Performance Summit was held at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Center in Overton, Texas on May 5, 2017. This highly anticipated event met all expectations of the ABBA Research & Breed Improvement and International Committees who worked tirelessly to host this event. Key international leaders representing several countries in South America were identified and invited to meet with ABBA representatives in an effort to collaborate and learn their perspectives to ensure ABBA remains a global leader in performance and a source for superior Brahman genetics. Much knowledge and information was gathered from the panel of international producers where the unique opportunity was provided to listen to our customers to determine whether any further research could be conducted to ensure we offer the selection tools (EPD's, Production Indices, etc.) that are actually used and relevant to their home operations.

The meeting was conducted by Chairman of Research & Breed Improvement Committee, Jim Bob Trant. He began with a warm welcomed, he introduced President of ABBA, George Kempfer and the ABBA leadership in attendance as well as Texas A&M staff, Dr. Charles R. Long, Professor and Resident Director of Research and Dr. Ron Randel, Professor Reproductive Physiology & Senior Faculty Fellow participated in the meeting. Also in attendance were Dr. Robert Whitson, Professor Emeritus & Special Assistant to the Vice Chancellor and Dr. Cliff Lamb, Head of Department of Animal Science. ABBA Recording Secretary, Armelinda Ibarra introduced the international panelist and gave a brief summary of their roles and contributions in the Brahman world. International panelist were: Dr. Atilio Atencio of Venezuela, Fernando Llano of Paraguay, Fernando Pinto of Costa Rica, Rodolfo Moreno of Panama, Dr. Cesar Villegas of Mexico, and ABBA International Directors, Rodolfo Garcia Pacheco and Gerardo Perez of Guatemala who were very instrumental with translations. Research & Breed Improvement Committeeman, Steve Wilkins followed with a history of ABBA Performance Program, an overview of ABBA's Carcass Evaluation Program, Performance Bull Test, and ongoing ABBA performance & research projects.

Great discussion ensued with a special focus to understand the types of production systems in each panelist's respective country and what traits they deem important for South American beef production. By doing so, it was clearly evident that all panelist believed heavily in our current performance programs and in our genetics as a whole. Discussion turned to the difference between performance and show cattle. Our guests were quick to point out that in most cases these were two completely different animals. Ideas to align our Brahman show cattle with our performance cattle were discussed. Traits that were conveyed as a top priority for the South American producer were: fertility (scrotal circumference), birth weight and weaning weight. Consideration is given to our carcass traits, yet there is a concern about the difference in the way feeder cattle are finished with grain while in other countries, most are truly grass-fed. Increasing EPD accuracies, developing a way to measure and give merit to cattle that produce beef in a forage based system, developing an indicator of early fertility and better education of our performance system were all suggestions offered by the panel. ABBA intends to take this information and ideas learned from this event to build an aggressive marketing campaign to promote our performance system worldwide with the help of the ABBA Communications and Marketing Committees. In summary there is little difference between our commercial customers here at home and in South America. They both desire profitable genetics that can function with minimal inputs yet create a quality protein product to help feed the world.

After a tasty catfish lunch the day concluded with a tour of the Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Center. Dr. Monte Rouquette, Professor of Forage Quality and Pasture Utilization, Dr. Gerald R. Smith, Professor of Forage Legume Breeding and Genetics, Dr. Vanessa Olson, Associate Professor Extension Forage Specialist and Dr. Ron Randal gave overviews of their

ongoing work and research projects. Dr. David Riley, Professor – Animal Breeding and Dr. Tom Welsh, Professor – Physiology with Texas A&M in College Station assisted with the tour and provided great insight and additional information on their research projects.

A **SPECIAL THANKS** to Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Center and their support staff: Stanley Brown, Jay Velvin, and Sandra Welch who helped make this event possible.

ABBA is committed and will continue to strive to improve its' performance measures and work towards positioning the ABBA and the Brahman breed as leaders in global beef production.