



Beef

SHORTHORN

The Universal Improver



JOERNAAL • JOURNAL



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Cattle Genetic Testing



Identity:

- DNA Profile and Parentage Testing
- 50K Illumina Bovine BeadChip

Characteristics:

- Polled
- Milk Production

Single Mutation Tests:

- Congenital Myasthenic Syndrome (CMS)
- Pompe Disease
- Myostatin (F94L, nt821, Q204X)
- Bulldog Dexter



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Message from the

President

■ GARY EDWARDS

The last year has been a watershed year for our Society and I am proud to say that after many years of promising signs, I can finally say that the Shorthorn is back!

Our wonderful, historic breed is now firmly again entrenched in the beef industry in South Africa, this borne out by a wonderful year in the show ring by some of our members and culminating in the National Sale, whereby numerous records were smashed and a 100% clearance of all animals on sale was achieved! It was so gratifying seeing so many new buyers and we wish them all the greatest of success with their animals.

It is particularly rewarding to see the enthusiasm of new breeders and it appears that a rosy future awaits our breed.

To our members, I pay tribute to you all for your contribution, dedication and commitment, you all

share in the success we as a breed have achieved.

Our dynamic council is completely committed to taking the Shorthorn to new heights in the coming year, with some exciting new initiatives, amongst others, the Shorthorn Plus programme. Breed development marketing and providing support for all breeders remains our priority.

As farmers, we face numerous challenges such as the FMD epidemic, rising fuel costs and land ownership concerns, however, we have always been resilient, and with faith in the Almighty, we will withstand what is thrown at us!

Lastly, I would like to encourage and promote camaraderie, team spirit, friendliness and co-operation and urge breeders and admirers of our breed to keep promoting and displaying our achievements in the beef world, thus, showing why we are known as the Universal Improver.

A word from the

Office

Dear Shorthorn Breeders,

The strength of the Shorthorn breed does not lie only in its genetics, but in the dedication, integrity, and passion of the breeders who carry it forward.

Each decision you make in your herds contributes to a much greater legacy — one built on performance, consistency, and pride in the breed. Your commitment is what ensures that the Shorthorn name continues to stand for quality and reliability in the livestock industry.

As a Society, we remain committed to supporting you through efficient administration, clear communication, and meaningful engagement. We encourage all members to remain engaged, stay informed about upcoming events, and to contact the office should any assistance be required. We are here to support you and to ensure that all administrative processes are handled as efficiently as possible.

However, our true success is only possible through active breeder participation and unity of purpose.

Let us continue to move forward with focus, strengthen collaboration, and build a future where the Shorthorn breed not only competes — but leads.

Thank you for your continued trust and commitment.

Melissa Blom

The Key to Success is a Solid Foundation.



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Genomics in Action

Practical Benefits

for BEEF SHORTHORN BREEDERS

■ JASON REDING and HANNAH KRUGER

Introduction

Genomics in livestock has made tremendous advances in recent years. The ability to capture an animal's unique DNA sequence has become a cornerstone of stud breeding in the local and international community. Over 50 000 DNA markers, called single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs), are analysed on a genomic chip (genotype) and is sometimes referred to as an "All in One" DNA test. Genomic services provided to beef breeds associated with SA Stud Book allows breeders to take the next step in boosting the prediction of an animal's true genetic potential, ensuring pedigree integrity and uncovering the status of single genes within your herd. The use of genomic information in beef cattle has a large impact on increasing the prediction accuracy of production and fertility traits that are lowly heritable, sex-limited and are only measured later in life (Berry *et al.*, 2014; Van Marle-Köster & Visser, 2018). Breeders unfamiliar with genomics and genomically enhanced breeding values (GEBVs) must be scratching their heads and wondering what the benefit of genotyping your stud animals truly is. This short article will hopefully illustrate the impact of genotyping an animal, the data that has resulted from breeders using the Beef Genomics Project 2 (BGP2) subsidy and how genomics is integrated into a genetic evaluation to enhance the accuracy of breeding values.

Genetic Relatedness using Genomics.

Apart from accurate parentage verification how does genomics benefit the breeder's ability to more accurately select his top animals? Research on genomics in beef and dairy cattle, as well as small stock breeds, indicates that genomics has the

biggest impact on traits that are lowly heritable, sex-limited and those only measured later in life.

The integration of genomic data into a genomic evaluation occurs in one simple step, it fills in the gaps of the pedigree. The pedigree will at times indicate that animals within the same breed are not related, as breeders may not yet have genetically linked their herds by using other breeders' animals, which is known to be a limitation of using simple mendelian inheritance as the sole pattern of inheritance across generations. Animals within the same breed will be inherently related to each other, as they are the same species (in this case cattle; *Bos*), subspecies (*taurine* vs *indicine*) and of the same breed (Beef Shorthorn), indicating that they will indeed share a similar genetic make-up. Table 1 showcases how the pedigree matrix uses simple mendelian inheritance to estimate genetic relatedness, while Table 2 showcases the genomic matrix using the 50 000 markers in conjunction with the pedigree matrix, to refine and truly estimate the relatedness between the animals.

Table 1: Genetic relatedness between animals using the pedigree and traditional mendelian inheritance.

	BSH_1	BSH_2	BSH_3	BSH_4	BSH_5	BSH_6
BSH_1	1.00					
BSH_2	0.00	1.00				
BSH_3	0.25	0.0625	1.00			
BSH_4	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00		
BSH_5	0.125	0.0625	0.125	0.00	1.00	
BSH_6	0.50	0.0312	0.50	0.00	0.0625	1.00

Animal 6 is the Sire of both Animal 1 and 3, which is indicated by the 50% relatedness estimated between them. This makes Animal 1 and 3 half-

siblings, meaning that it is assumed they share 25% of the same genetic make-up from the sire's side. Animal 5 is a close relative to Animals 1 and 3, with the pedigree estimating they are 12.5% related. Animal 4 has no pedigree links to any of the other animals; thus, it is assumed that they are 0% related to the rest of the animals in Table 1.

Table 2: Genetic relatedness between animals combining the pedigree information and the genomics to estimate the true genetic relationships between these animals.

	BSH_1	BSH_2	BSH_3	BSH_4	BSH_5	BSH_6
BSH_1	1.00					
BSH_2	0.06	1.00				
BSH_3	0.315	0.08	1.00			
BSH_4	0.04	0.03	0.07	1.00		
BSH_5	0.146	0.05	0.095	0.01	1.00	
BSH_6	0.50	0.02	0.50	0.04	0.085	1.00

By comparing Table 1 with Table 2, the genomics has corrected the assumed genetic relationship to a realised genetic relationship. Animals 1 and 3, who are half-siblings, are now indicated to be 31.5% related, meaning they inherited more similar genetics from the sire than was originally assumed. The genomics has revealed that Animal 5 is more related to Animal 1 (14.6%) than to Animal 3 (9.5%). Most importantly Animal 4 is no longer not linked to the other animals but is between 1% - 7% related to the other animals. Genomics allows the BLUP analysis to make connections between genetically related animals that the traditional pedigrees are unable to make and thus aids in accurately predicting an animal's genetic potential not just from the animals it is directly related to.

Single Genes

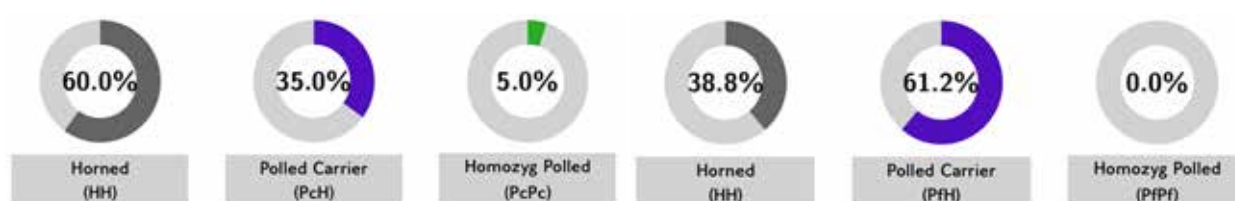
Genes can mutate, resulting in changes that create variations from the original or "wild type" form. While some genes exhibit multiple variants,

an animal inherits only two copies—one from each parent. These can be identical (homozygous) or different (heterozygous). In heterozygous cases, one allele may dominate; for example, an animal with one polled and one horned allele will appear polled due to the dominance of the polled allele. However, traits are rarely determined solely by a single gene, as interactions with other genes and environmental factors often influence the phenotype. Detailed information on the mutations discussed here is available on the Online Mendelian Inheritance of Animals website (Nicholas et al., 1995).

Polledness

The genetics of polledness has been of major interest to cattle breeders and livestock geneticists. With the revolution of genomics, this has allowed for the unravelling of the true genetic mechanism that controls the expression of horns or polledness. Referred to as the POLLED gene, this gene is located on Chromosome 1 of the cattle genome. The first mutation was identified in Brahman cattle and is called the Celtic variant. This is the main mutation causing polledness in beef and dairy cattle worldwide and was verified in the Bonsmara and Drakensberger breeds by (Grobler *et al.*, 2018). A few researchers noticed that some cattle breeds were still phenotypically polled but were homozygous horned (HH) for the Celtic (Pc) variant. This indicated that a different mutation on the POLLED gene may be responsible. Further research has revealed three other variants within this POLLED gene such as the Friesian (Pf) variant discovered in Holsteins which is now present in a few beef cattle breeds, the Mongolian variant in Kazakh breeds and more recently the Guarani variant in Nellore and Gyr breeds (Nicholas *et al.*, 2023). Currently, all four of these POLLED gene mutations can cause polledness in all cattle breeds. Figure 1 below, indicates that both the Celtic and the Friesian POLLED variants are both segregating in the South African Beef Shorthorn

Figure 1: The segregation of the Celtic (Pc) and Friesian (Pf) POLLED variants in the South African Beef Shorthorn population.



population. Animals that carry one copy of each POLLED variant, meaning they are genetically PcPf, have been observed and are considered homozygous polled.

Double muscling

The myostatin protein regulates normal growth and development of muscle in an animal's body. A few mutations can disrupt myostatin's ability to function normally, causing muscles to grow uncontrollably, resulting in an animal being double-muscled. E226X, Q204X and nt821 mutations cause a break in the myostatin protein, and affected animals will be double-muscled. The F94L mutation is known as the "profit gene" as it doesn't break the myostatin protein but rather affects its ability to bind to muscles and ensure normal muscling. These mutations behave recessively, meaning it is sometimes impossible to identify carriers of double-muscling mutations, as they only appear in an affected calf, which is a result of mating two carrier animals (Csürh  s *et al.*, 2023). Affected animals will have less fat deposition, which will lead to a lower lifetime production, fertility and longevity. It is recommended to ensure that sire bulls are "Free" from these mutations, especially when using imported semen to ensure you are not introducing these detrimental mutations to your herd. E226X is known to be Beef Shorthorn specific mutation and currently the only way to test for this mutation in South Africa is by genotyping your animals.

proportion (57%) of animals observed to be in Level 4 and Level 5, in comparison to the South African Beef cattle population with most animals being in Level 2 and 3.

Milk-related mutations

Genes associated with milk traits in dairy cattle also influence these traits in beef cattle. The interplay between single-gene effects and polygenic factors impacts the quantity and quality of milk a dam produces, which in turn affects calf weaning weight. The **ABCG2** gene is known to increase milk volume while reducing milk fat content and percentage. **DGAT1**, a major gene in beef cattle, has a significant additive effect, increasing milk fat, intramuscular fat, and carcass fat. **Beta-Casein**, commonly associated with A2 milk, enhances both milk volume and protein production. Variants of **Kappa-Casein** also play a role, with the A-variant boosting milk production and the B-variant reducing milk protein percentages. Similarly, **Beta-Lactoglobulin** affects milk composition, where Haplotype A increases milk volume and Haplotype B enhances milk fat and protein content.

Detrimental Mutations

Genetic disorders such as Crooked Tail, Osteopetrosis, and Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (a connective tissue disorder) cause distinctive phenotypic abnormalities, often mistaken for general weakness or poor health in calves. **Glycogen Storage Diseases** (GSD, including



Meat Tenderness

A recent study in South African beef cattle breeds revealed that a few mutations on the Calpastatin and Calpain genes affect meat tenderness, during the conversion of muscle to meat in the post-slaughter process (Basson *et al.*, 2022). Certain mutation combinations result in an animal being genetically predisposed to having more tender meat. These mutations can be combined to reveal a tenderness score, which ranges from 1 (Average) to 6 (Most Tender). The South African Beef Shorthorn is one of the breeds with the highest

Pompe's disease), resulting from mutations that impair glycogen storage, and is a mutation the Beef Shorthorn society is monitoring to eradicate this recessive mutation from the population. To reduce the risk of these disorders, genetic testing of sire bulls is essential to exclude carriers and ensure herd health.

Future applications

As research constantly innovates, genomics can assist in revealing the true underlying genetic mechanisms that influence adaptability and

fertility traits. Infertility haplotypes, genes which cause embryo or foetal re-absorption, are a widely known problem in the dairy cattle industry, with recent studies revealing similar haplotypes in Limousin and Simmental beef cattle populations. The use of genomics is ushering in a new era of stud breeding, especially for breeders who may have closed herds or are new members of their society. The recording of performance and fertility traits will not be replaced by genomics, as genomics only assists in boosting the pedigree side of the BLUP equation. **Phenotype will always remain King**, while **Genomics is the Queen** the King has always been looking for. A common misconception widely stated is that “Genomics is the future”, when genomics is now available in South Africa with current and relevant applications, so take advantage and advance your herd to the next level!

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At Strydberg Beef Shorthorns, cattle are more than a business – they are a long-term commitment to building genetics that work in the real world while steadily elevating the standard of the breed.

Our approach is rooted in one principle: profitability drives sustainability. We breed for the producer who depends on kilograms weaned, cows in calf and bulls that last. Fertility, adaptability, structural soundness and good temperament are non-negotiable. A bull must travel, work and leave daughters that remain productive year after year. If an animal cannot add value under practical South African conditions, it does not remain in the program.

At the same time, we never lose sight of phenotype, presence and breed character. Functional cattle can – and should – look the part. Through disciplined selection, careful mating decisions and honest evaluation, we continue to strengthen our maternal base while pushing performance forward.

Success to us is measured beyond a single day in the ring or a hammer price. It is seen in repeat buyers, in herds that improve over time, and in the confidence our clients have when they invest in our genetics.

The Shorthorn breed offers a powerful advantage to the modern beef industry: unmatched maternal strength, early maturity and exceptional value in crossbreeding systems. Strydberg Beef Shorthorns is proud to play a role in securing and expanding that future.

**WE ARE NOT CHASING FASHION. WE ARE BUILDING
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From Claims to Proof:

The Future of SHORTHORN CREDIBILITY

Why Historic Reputation is Not Genetic Evaluation



■ LUKE BOWMAN, Bowman Superior Genetics, www.BreedForProfit.com

Luke Bowman operates Bowman Superior Genetics with his father, Phillip, and their families in Greens Fork, Indiana, USA. He works at the intersection of cattle genetics, reproductive technology, breeder education and business decisions for beef producers and genetic organizations across North America and internationally.

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Let me say the quiet part out loud: Shorthorn's slower uptake in the commercial sector is not because of the cow. It never has been.

The modern Shorthorn cow is fine. Actually, she's better than fine. She calves without help, milks without drama, fleshed on last year's grass, and weans a calf that grades well at the beef packer. Her daughters stay in the herd longer than they are supposed to, and her disposition is good enough that you can work her without a full crew and extra tall gates. By any production-economics standard you want to apply, the modern Shorthorn cow earns her spot.

The problem is that most people do not know any of that, because not enough Shorthorn breeders anywhere in the world are bothering to prove it.

I say this as someone who has spent three decades in the genetics and seedstock space, first as a youth in the Shorthorn world, then in my professional career working with a multitude of breed associations and their performance data, A.I. organizations, commercial cow-calf operations, and registered herds across North America and internationally. I have seen what happens when a breed commits to data collection and submission and what happens when it does not. The gap is not subtle and it's only getting larger, plus it is impossible to shrink through creative advertising alone.

Shorthorn's contribution to global beef is not theoretical. The breed's maternal and carcass qualities helped build flourishing composite breeds on multiple continents, the South African Bonsmara, the Australian Droughtmaster, and the American Beefmaster among them, specifically because Shorthorn brought documented, transferable value to those crosses. Those same



qualities exist in the modern purebred. Maternal calving ease that is real, not just claimed. Fleshing ability that holds through a dry year or a tight feed budget. Marbling that differentiates a carcass in a quality-graded market. Longevity, or Stayability that keeps cows in production without heroic intervention.

The challenge Shorthorn faces globally is that the breed's value proposition gets stated but rarely proven at scale. Too many seedstock programs still rely solely on visual type selection or sometimes show-ring performance and breeder reputation as their primary marketing currency. Those things have their place. But in a commercial beef market that has increasingly tight margins and is well-connected across borders, a commercial buyer who cannot quantify the genetic difference between two or more bulls will default to a breed with the bigger national profile and the more visible data infrastructure.

The path forward is not complicated, even if it requires discipline. It starts with whole-herd data reporting; documenting every cow, every calf in every contemporary group, including the ones that underperform and the ones you cull. EBV/EPD systems are only as accurate as the data submitted into them, and selective reporting is the genetic evaluation's original sin. Herds that commit to honest, complete contemporary group submission build EBV/EPD accuracy or reliability over time. That accuracy/reliability is a sales tool. A commercial buyer who can compare a Shorthorn bull's higher-accuracy calving ease or growth figure against a bull from a more popular breed alternative is making an informed decision, not a faith-based one. That is the buyer relationship seedstock producers should want. And the more data submitted by the membership, the more genetic outliers will be found, and when outliers become influential, breed averages adjust accordingly, and so do breed reputations.

The Small Herd Is Not a Handicap

Here is something the industry consistently undersells: genetic improvement programs are not the exclusive domain of large, well-resourced operations. A 25 or 30-cow registered Shorthorn herd with complete data reporting and genomic testing on every calf is generating more actionable genetic information than a 250 or 300-

cow program running bulls without records. Every calving is observed. Every culling decision is a data point. The contemporary group is clean and defined. The math favors the disciplined small producer more than he realizes.

The tools are available, and they have never been more accessible. Multi-breed EBV/EPD platforms, genomic enhancement, economic selection indexes that balance calving ease, growth, carcass merit, and maternal function using a single profit-oriented number; these are not theoretical resources. They are operational today, in multiple countries, at a cost that a working seedstock program can absorb. The investment is proportional. The payoff is cumulative. And the reputation that comes from consistent, verifiable data integrity is the kind that outlasts any single marketing cycle or show-ring result.

The Crossbreeding Door Is Already Open

Commercial beef production globally is not abandoning its composite and crossbreeding systems. That is not a threat to the registered Shorthorn industry, it is a standing opportunity if breeders choose to position themselves for it. There is ongoing, worldwide demand for high-quality maternal and terminal breed inputs into crossing programs, and the modern Shorthorn is built for that role. A well-bred Shorthorn cow introduced into a rotational crossing program brings calving ease genetics, improved marbling potential, and maternal longevity without sacrificing the proper growth efficiency that commercial producers require for long term sustainability. That combined contribution is real. It is documented in the herds that have done the work. It is invisible everywhere else.

The breed does not need a reinvention. It does not need a new marketing campaign or a different name. What it needs is more operations across the United States, across the United Kingdom, across Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, and every other country where Shorthorn cattle still run, that are willing to collect the data honestly, submit it completely, and let the genetics speak without editorial assistance.

The cattle are ready. They have always been ready. The question is whether the people behind them are willing to prove it.



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Hot Tips

for buying A BULL



■ PJ BUDLER

1. When analysing the profit Indexes - bear in mind which link in the value chain will profit from that specific Index.
2. If you believe that the average cow in the breed is big enough, then logically, breed average for Yearling Weight EBV is sufficient.
3. Fertility is the number one trait in driving profitability in a livestock operation.
4. BALANCE
5. If your eye is tuned to functional efficiency, then phenotype is paramount.
6. Heifer Bulls are an unnecessary and harmful construct.
7. Skull shape is of absolute importance when evaluating cattle.
8. Mum's the Word
9. Pigment is not just a bonus; it really is important.
10. If you're located are in the tropics or subtropics, and humidity and insects are a

challenge, then it's essential for cattle to be tropically adaptable.

11. Muscle, Muscle, Muscle!
12. A bull must be able to lift his head and see into the next county.
13. FAT - Good, Bad or Ugly?
14. Eat, Walk, Reproduce

These are non-negotiables when selecting your breeding bulls.



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- Bevat 'n groeibevorderaar wat voeromset en groei stimuleer.
- Gebruik hoëgehalte, natuurlike proteïene wat volgens die aminosuurprofiel vir optimale karkasgroei gebalanseer word.
- Werk voedingsteurnisse en koksidiöse teen.
- Verseker maksimum wins.
- Geskik vir die afronding van bulle en skoubeeste.



PROTEÏEN-KONSENTRAAT

Vir meer inligting oor Molatek se spesifieke voere en dienste, kontak:
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MOLATEK



Success story of *Crossbreeding* with BEEF SHORTHORN

The Smythe family have had a long association with Shorthorns and farm in the Nottingham Road area in the beautiful Natal Midlands. The farm abuts the newly build Springgrove dam is in a high rainfall area and generally regarded as sour veld.

The Smythe's breeding policy has been to cross their herd, consisting of Beefmaster and Shorthorns cows.

The Shorthorns cows are put to Charolais bull and the Beefmaster are mated to Shorthorn Bulls.

"We calve down into dry forage kikuyu with a production lick and soon as we can after reaping the maize, we draft all cows with calves onto the maize lands, which have been over sown with Rye grass seed" says Bayden.

The Shorthorn bulls have, over the years, been bought from Victor Lourens of Rock Valley and Niel Dry's Niemen herd. We choose bulls with strong beef qualities and colour has never been a criteria when choosing our bulls says Bayden. We have a 96% conception rate in the herd.

Our heifers are mated to Shorthorn bulls and calve a little earlier in the year from 1 July. Calves receive a creep till such time that they go out onto the veld. Cows go out onto the veld in September/October, depending on the season. We wean all

calves at the beginning of February and are sold straight off their mothers to a feedlot.

Weaning weights over the years have been as follows:

2021 - bull calves @ 310 kg
heifers @ 290 kg

2022 - bull calves @ 290 kg
heifers @ 270 kg

The weaners were lighter, due to a poor season.

An experiment was conducted in the 2022 breeding season whereby Bayden inseminated his Shorthorn heifers to Red Brahman semen and calves have been exceptional.

These results were soon noticed by neighbouring farmers and Bayden lent one a Shorthorn bull. Previously, this neighbour had a weaning weight of 225 kg, and after weaning his first Shorthorn sired calves, his weaning weight increased to 270 Kg!

On seeing the returns, he now buys Shorthorn bulls with us on a share basis.

We wish the Smythe family continued success with their farming venture, and they can be justly proud of their magnificent cattle!



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Members



Discover HERBEN BEEF SHORTHORN STUD

Located in the Heart of the Free State, **Herben Beef Shorthorn Stud** is not just a cattle breeding business; it's a family affair that combines ****passion, quality, and genetics**** to produce some of the finest Beef Shorthorn cattle in the region. Our commitment to excellence goes beyond the pasture; it's about building a community that shares our love for these magnificent animals and the land they thrive on.

Why Choose Herben Beef Shorthorn?

At Herben Beef Shorthorn, we believe in the power of passion. Our team is dedicated to creating an environment where producing quality Beef Shorthorn is not just a job, but a joyful experience. Here's what makes us stand out:

Family-Oriented Approach

We involve our family in every step of the process, ensuring that each generation learns the value of hard work and dedication. This commitment fosters a culture of care and respect for our cattle, enhancing the quality of our herd.

Superior Genetics

Our breeding program is built on a solid foundation of genetic excellence. We carefully select our breeding stock to ensure that each calf inherits the best traits from their lineage. This focus on genetics translates into healthier, more robust animals that produce high-quality beef.

Quality Assurance

At Herben Beef Shorthorn, we prioritize quality in every aspect. From the way we care for our cattle to the final product delivered to you, quality is our guiding principle. Our beef is not just a product; it's a testament to our hard work and dedication.

Join Our Community

We invite you to become part of the Herben Beef Shorthorn family. Whether you're a seasoned cattle farmer or just starting out, our doors are open to anyone with a passion for quality beef. We host regular events, workshops, and farm tours where you can learn about our practices, see our herd up close, and connect with other beef enthusiasts.

Experience the Herben Difference

Our motto—****Powered by Passion, Perfected by Genetics, Delivered with Quality****—is more than just words; it's a promise. Herben Beef Shorthorn Stud is here to provide you with the finest beef while making the process enjoyable for everyone involved.

Let's embark on this journey together!

Visit us today to learn more about our cattle, our family, and our commitment to quality beef production. Together, we can cultivate a thriving community that values excellence and shares a passion for the Beef Shorthorn breed.

By choosing Herben Beef Shorthorn, you're not just purchasing beef; you're investing in a legacy of quality and community. Reach out to us today, and let's make producing quality Beef Shorthorn a fun and rewarding experience!

Contact Us

For inquiries, visit our Instagram page **herben_beefshorthorns** or reach out via phone 084 351 5820 or email – Herbstbennie7@gmail.com. We look forward to welcoming you to the Herben Beef Shorthorn family!

