

Breeds of Beef Cattle

Breeds of Beef Cattle – Study Notes

1. Overview

- **Purpose of beef cattle** – raised primarily for meat production (steer, heifer, bull).
- **Key selection traits** – growth rate, feed efficiency, carcass quality, temperament, adaptability to climate/management system.
- **Classification** – often grouped by geographic origin, physical type (e.g., “British”, “American Continental”, “Zebu”), or primary production system (grass?fed vs. feedlot).

2. Major Beef Breeds by Region

Region / Origin	Breed (Common Names)	Distinguishing Features	Typical Uses & Strengths
United Kingdom	Angus (Aberdeen Angus)	Solid black (or red), naturally polled, medium-sized, good marbling	Premium grain?fed beef; high carcass quality; calm temperament
	Hereford	Red body, white face, horns (polled strains exist)	Adaptable to a range of climates; good maternal ability; efficient on pasture
	Charolais	White/cream, large frame, heavy muscling	Fast growth, high yield; often used in cross?breeding for size
	Limousin	Light golden?red, muscular, low fat	Excellent feed conversion; lean meat; good for crossbreeding
France	Simmental (also Swiss)	Large, red?white coat, both dairy & beef lines	Dual?purpose; good maternal traits; high weaning weights
	Maine?Anjou	Deep red, large, docile	High meat yield, good for grass?fed systems
Germany / Central Europe	German Angus	Black, polled, similar to Scottish Angus	Strong marbling, good for cold climates

Breeds of Beef Cattle

Region / Origin	Breed (Common Names)	Distinguishing Features	Typical Uses & Strengths
United States (American Continental)	Blonde d'Aquitaine	White, massive, thick-set	Very heavy muscling; used for "heavy-weight" carcasses
	Brahman (Zebu type)	Large hump, loose skin, heat-tolerant, often gray	Excellent heat tolerance, parasite resistance; used in hot, humid regions
	Brangus (Brahman × Angus)	Black, polled, combines heat tolerance & marbling	Versatile; good for both pasture and feedlot
	Santa Gerald (Brahman × Angus)	Red, polled, heat tolerant	Similar to Brangus, but red coat
South America	Texas Longhorn	Long, curved horns, varied colors	Heritage breed; hardy, efficient on low-quality forage
	Criollo (various local types)	Diverse colors, adapted to arid/rough terrain	Excellent for extensive grazing; low input
	Nelore (Brazil)	Large hump, gray-black, Zebu	Dominant in Brazil; heat-tolerant, high fertility
Australia / New Zealand	Droughtmaster (Brahman × British)	Red, polled, heat-tolerant	Suited to semi-arid grazing
	Wagyu (Japanese origin, now in AU/NZ)	Black, high intramuscular fat (marbling)	Premium "Kobe-style" beef; slower growth, high feed cost
Africa	Sanga (e.g., Nguni, Tuli)	Small horns, mixed Bos taurus × Bos indicus	Adapted to savanna;