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# Devon Digest

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FALL 2009

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## Annual Conference & Sale... Coming Soon

The 3rd Annual "Gourmet Beef On Grass" NADA Conference and Select Sale will be held in Franklin, Texas on Oct. 16-17 with a pre-conference school on the "Non-Mechanical Forage Harvester" by Gearld Fry on Oct. 15.

Plan to attend and hear from the experts:

- How to Select & Breed Quality Devon by Gearld Fry

- The Ins and Outs of AI and Embryo Transfers by Dr. Boyd Bien

- The Natural Medicine Tool Chest by Dr. Sue Beal

- Warner Bratzler Shear Test Demo by Kathy Richburg & Teddy Gentry

- Minerals, Minerals, Minerals by Dr. Will Winter



*Fun at the 2nd annual NADA Conference at Watson Farms in Rhode Island*

- Plus: Keynote speech by Dr. Fred Provenza, a compost tea making demo, pasture walks and cattle judging workshop with Gearld. AND the 1st-ever Devon steak cook-off & competition with special guest judges

And don't forget the Select Sale featuring "Herd-Building" Devon genetics. Now's the time to start building that quality Devon herd you've been dreaming about!

This year will also feature some great food. (For those of you who've never tried grass-fed Devon; this is your chance!)

For those who've attended in the past; this year promises to be the best yet. If you've never attended; don't miss out again this year. Come join us as we learn and celebrate Devon cattle together!

Register now at [www.northamericandevon.com](http://www.northamericandevon.com) or call (903)879-2441 for more information.

## Ruminations from Rose Bud... Full-Blood vs. Pure-Bred By Gearld Fry

The Devon Associations of the world use the words pure-bred to describe the purity (genetic blood-density) of the animals in their registry and the word full-blood to describe the animals with an admixture of some other breed in their genetic make-up. All the Devon breed registries of the world use the term pure-bred. All the

Devon breed registries of the world except New Zealand and NADA have a breeding-up program and they call those animals full-blood.

According to Webster's Dictionary, the use of these terms is not applicable to a percentage animal. Let's take a look at the definitions for their proper meanings:

*Continued on pg. 2*



## Foodie's Fare...

Dixie Grassfed Meatloaf by Shelli Moore

### Ingredients:

2 lbs. grassfed ground beef  
3 eggs  
1 Cup Milk  
5 slices torn bread  
1 Cup chopped onion  
1 Cup grated carrots  
1 Cup grated cheddar cheese  
2 TB parsley  
2 tsp. salt  
2 tsp. basil, thyme or sage  
1/2 tsp. pepper

### Topping:

1 Cup tomato sauce  
1 Cup brown sugar  
2 tsp. prepared mustard

In large bowl, beat eggs and milk. Add bread pieces and let stand until liquid is absorbed. Stir in onions, carrots, cheese and seasonings. Add beef and mix well. Place in shallow baking pan and shape into 7.5 x 13.5 in. loaf. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 min. Prepare topping and spoon over meatloaf after 45 min. Continue baking 30 more min. (Total baking time is 1hr. 15 min.) Let stand for 10 minutes before serving. Serves 6.

## Clever Contraptions... Made in the Shade

Ted Stevens has recently designed, produced and refined this clever shademobile. It measures 22' x 30' and is equipped with misters, watering system tie-ins, a mineral feeder and drop cloths soaked in orange oil (for pest repellent). Ted uses shade cloth with 65-70% coverage, which allows the wind to blow right thru it. (They even use it in shaded areas as it helps to disburse the manure that so often gets localized under trees.)

What you see pictured is the 2nd of 3 prototypes and it weighs close to 2000 lbs. Version 3 will not include hydraulics and has been lightened so that it can be pulled by a 4-wheeler.

The Stevens' Maysfield, TX farm has paddocks measuring 240' x 1200' with watering valves every 150'. These can be hooked right into the watering system tie-ins on the shademobile using the built-in hose reel.

All models use new 2 3/8" oilfield pipe and the joints are coped and welded in-house. He uses aircraft tires for their ruggedness.

Ted's background in custom furniture design and manufacturing has proven useful toward creating a sleek, sturdy and efficient product. He's also manufactured a set of jigs that will allow him production capabilities of 4 canopies/day!

Make sure to check out one of Ted's shademobiles at NADA's 3rd Annual "Gourmet Beef on Grass"- Southern Edition in Maysfield, TX on Oct. 16-17.



## Ruminations... continued from pg. 1

**Full blood**> A full-blooded individual of unmixed ancestry, lacking no particulars, genuine, containing fullness of substance; rich full-bloodedness.

**Pure-bred**> Bred from members of a recognized breed, strain, or kind without any admixture of other blood over many generations.

Full-blood and pure-bred have a similar meaning but a major difference when observed and applied to our Devon cattle. Full-blood denotes ancestry of *never* having mixed blood. Pure-bred says *many generations*. Pure-bred leaves room for a breeding-up program.

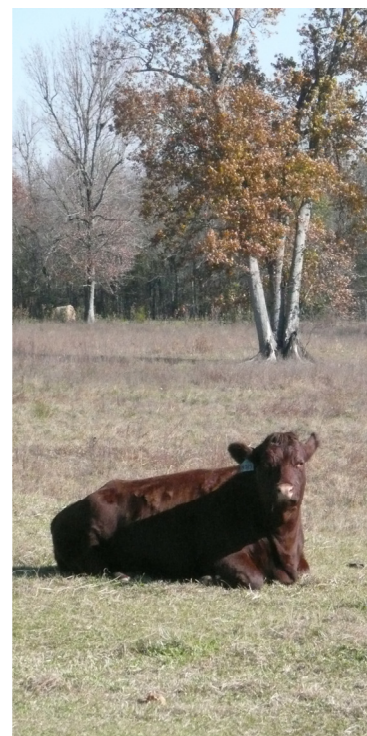
When you put a full-blood Devon bull over another breed of cow (or even a half-blood cow) then the calf produced from that mating is NOT a Devon. It could never be until you continuously repeat this breeding practice using a full-blood bull over the continuous offspring for fourteen generations or 56 years. (If you start with the 50% cow and the next being a 3/4 percent blood and continue on with the process, you will be back to the full-blood status at the 14th generation mark.) I know this is a little far out, but please try to understand the point. At the 14th generation mark you would be back to the full-blood status. I agree, if your selection process had been for any one or more characteristics for 3-4 generations, you could stabilize those desired

traits. However, the occasional mishap or failure to breed true would happen. Your animals would not breed completely true until you have reached at least the 8th generation point.

I must ask a question at this point. Why would you want to contaminate the Devon gene pool with admixture blood? Robert Bakewell and Jan Bonsma looked at the Devon breed in 1750 and 1960 and both said there was no other breed that could be added to the Devon for improvement- of quality of meat and milk, performance, breed characteristics or digestibility.

It is perfectly fine if a commercial producer purchases a full-blood Devon bull as a herd bull for his breeding management practices, however, those calves should never be incorporated into the Devon herd books at any point. An outside Devon breeding-up program should be kept separate from the herd books and breed sales. They are not Devon. If a percentage blood bull is used on a full-blood cow, the genetics in the offspring are contaminated and will not breed true. The same is true with the percentage blood cow.

There is no beef breed in America today that can compete with or boast of the consistency and quality of product and utilization of forage



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## *A Day on the Farm... Fourche River Farm & Cattle Co.*

Greg and Lavonne Hickl own and operate three separate farms lying in the Fourche LaFave River Valley, which is nestled in the Ouachita Mountains of west-central Arkansas. The primary farm consists of 732 acres of bottomland along the Fourche River and is focused on developing premium Devon cattle seedstock. The Hickls have accumulated registered Devon genetics from New Hampshire, New York, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Missouri, Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado and California. Their goal is to provide exceptional seedstock to southern cattle breeders seeking the numerous advantages of Devon cattle.

Their silty bottomland soil has tremendous potential, but as Greg puts it, "We're currently five years into a twenty year process of bringing the farm back to our desired level of sustainability. This soil had been consistently row-cropped for well over a century, and rebuilding the lost nutrients and structure is a slow and gradual process."

So far the Hickls have used three different types of organic foliar mineral sprays, fish emulsion, Redmond Salt, Molasses and composted hay to bring the soil back to life. They will be applying compost tea for many years to come and are already seeing dramatic increases

in the amounts of earthworms and dung beetles as well as improved soil tilth.

The Hickl's three daughters (Ellie, Erin and Emma) actively participate in the farm's activities handling the Katahdin sheep flock, Large Black Hogs, laying hens and various other cattle-related chores including daily hand-milking. As Lavonne puts it, "Our move from the city to the farm was just as much about quality of life as it was a desire to raise quality livestock. We wanted to provide a healthy and stable atmosphere for our children where they could explore the many challenges and opportunities farming provides."

The Hickls currently own 62 pureblood Devons with an expectation of another 25-30 embryo calves due by the end of 2009. They have a long-term goal of owning 200 of the best Devon brood cows in the world and are eager to work with interested buyers.

For more information, you can call Greg or Lavonne @ (479)299-4368 or visit their website at [www.fourcheriverfarm.com](http://www.fourcheriverfarm.com).



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### *Quintessential Quotes*

**"We throw out of the question the absurd proposition entertained by some, that any one of the present well established breeds of cattle, have been formed by crossing those of divers strange breeds upon each other. Such has not been the case in any long established breeds with which we are familiar. In the history of those breeds, we have seen that with one or two exceptions, they have existed from time immemorial in their own distinct characteristics and varieties, and that they have been improved from the *blood of themselves alone*. That question needs no further discussion. The only question now is, as to the *fact* of that improvement being made, and to what extent, by a course of breeding from close relationship in blood with each other...with a view to *fixing and concentrating* those good points still more strongly in the blood and constitution of their animals."**

**American Cattle: Their History, Breeding and**

**Management**

**By Lewis F. Allen**

**Published 1868**

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### *Relevant Readings*

Introduction to Breeding Farm Animals

By Laurence M. Winters, 1942

Breeding and Improvement of Farm Animals

By Victor Arthur Rice, 1942

Animal Nutrition

By Leonard A. Maynard, 1947

The Milch Cow

By E.R. Cochran, 1944

Folk Medicine

By D.C. Jarvis, M.D. 1958

I'll Take My Stand

By Twelve Southerners, 1977

The Fatal Harvest Reader

Edited by Andrew Kimbrell, 2002

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# Devon... Right from the start!

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## *Ruminations... Continued from pg. 2*

of our Devon. Why would we want or need to contaminate our Devon genetics with genetics that are inferior or incorporate a heterosis effect?

Animals are not improved by breeding, except in the increased stability gained in dominant characteristics, and the certainty with which they are transmitted, as the offspring, at the time of birth, can only be possessed of the characteristics they have derived from their ancestors.

Breed for full-blood status, and the fine traits and characteristics that you expect to achieve will almost always come from within your own herd, including the herd sire. By this method you eliminate heterosis and in so doing, you create herd bulls for your neighbors.

Commentary - Thomas Shaw:

The term pure-bred is frequently used as synonymous with full blood, and thoroughbred, as the latter is now understood. It defines animals of a well defined breed without admixture of other blood. Pedigree does not necessarily bring along with it purity of blood, nor is it in itself any guaranty of individual excellence. Individually, pure-bred animals are frequently inferior to grades. This does not arise from any law necessarily leading to such a result, but rather from improper breeding.

It would take many generations of precise breeding, using the offspring from a full-blooded Devon bull in a planned breeding program, to get back to a pure-bred genetic status and overcome admixture. Example: Joining a full-blood Devon bull to a full-blood Red Angus cow will produce a progeny with red hair, tan nose and some white hair in the purse area and most will be polled. That result is a half-blooded polled animal that will breed true in color and will have traits of both breeds. You have just created an animal with the highest level of heterosis. It is a hybrid and it will breed as a hybrid, therefore, you have no control of the genetics passed on. It takes 14 generations of continued planned breeding of each female back to a full-blood Devon bull before you reach a true full-blood Devon status. If you close the herd at the 8th generation point, you will have created something different than a Devon because the admixtures are still active.

There is a contrasting difference in the meanings of the two terms. Reality is, the so called Devon breeding-up programs and the resulting progeny called a full-blood is inaccurate. It is also inaccurate to call them pure-bred; they are neither.

The Devon breed (the true one) is the only British breed of beef cattle in America that still possesses a full-blood status and we call it pure-bred. NADA is a young association. If we do not want to see the great Devon breed we know today deteriorate into the lowly status of all the other commodity beef breeds of America, we must set standards and stand by them. There is much heartache in doing the right thing. We must act now and develop a set of standards for what our Devons should be so that in twenty years they will still be Devon and not just another breed of red cattle.