

A superior animal, a sophisticated buyer: leading the way with GeneSTAR MVPs

If you've ever had the opportunity to ride in a farm truck with James Henderson of Bradley 3 Ranch, it's easy to sense his true passion for the Angus breed. James' knowledge about marketing registered cattle and his keen cow sense is testament to why this herd has become one of the most respected Angus herds in the country.

Bradley 3 Ranch, located in Memphis, Texas, was started by the Bradley family in 1955 and became home to registered Angus cattle in 1958. The Ranch was dubbed "Bradley 3 Ranch" because it was founded by the third generation of the Bradley family and was their third ranch in Texas. Generations later, the ranch still bears the recognizable "Bradley 3 Ranch" name.

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— James Henderson**

Leading the Angus breed

Bradley 3 Ranch is unique for more reasons than their name; the ranch has always been on the forefront of emerging technology. Research used as the basis for conducting ultrasound to measure fat thickness, ribeye area, percent intramuscular fat and marbling was completed at the Bradley 3 Ranch; they were also the first ranch to use DNA technology for parentage more than 13 years ago.

Today, Bradley 3 Ranch is home to 400 plus registered Angus animals, representing some of the most progressive genetics in the breed. To provide their buyers with the most information, the ranch tracks dozens of traits on each animal, which helps buyers make educated decisions at the annual Bradley 3 Ranch bull sale.

"Our customers are large, commercial ranchers who are very sophisticated buyers," says Henderson. "There are ranchers who show up with laptops and spreadsheets full of data to help decide which bulls to bring home. At our 2009 sale the buyers in attendance represented over 200,000 cows. Because these are large, progressive ranchers, we need to provide them with more data and information on our animals than ever before in the breed."

Evolving the herd with MVPs

A natural fit to evolving technology has been the inception of GeneSTAR® technology. The ranch began testing animals with GeneSTAR in 2003. At first Bradley 3 Ranch tested just herd sires, but later began testing all of their bulls. Today, every bull and female on the ranch is tested with GeneSTAR MVPs™ to provide the most information for matings and grouping strategies.

"There is a five-year gap from breeding decisions to progeny, which means we need to be thinking years in advance to stay out in front of the industry," explains Henderson. "By using GeneSTAR MVPs, we can help our customers understand where the industry is going and how it's going to get there."



**JAMES HENDERSON
BRADLEY 3 RANCH**

Integrating MVPs into management

Henderson shares that the information from MVPs is used in a composite score to decide the future of each elite female and bull in the herd. While no single trait is used exclusively to make decisions, the ranch utilizes MVP results as one key piece in their decision-making process.

"We are using MVPs as a benchmark in the herd to help make grouping and mating decisions," says Henderson. "Each fall we sort bull calves into paddocks to do our own feed efficiency testing and this fall we will use MVP results to help us sort these groups."

Whether it be bulls or females, Henderson notes that their goal is to provide high-quality cattle that can excel in any environment, and MVPs are helping them identify these cattle.

"We want to provide our customers with extremely functional cattle that will make their ranch profitable," says Henderson. "We're focused on fertility—cattle that can perform exceptionally in harsh environments. We have high expectations of how things will be done and we believe MVPs will help us improve our herd over time."