

From Education to Action

Live Oak Legend Award recipients built success from solid foundation

by Chel Terrell

Just a short 40 years ago, Bob and Bonnie Siddons sat high up in a quiet corner of the Live Oak sale barn, observing the first of what would become many Live Oak Beefmaster Breeders Association (LOBBA) bull sales. It didn't take long sitting there, watching bull after bull make his way through the ring and witnessing buyer bids flying high, for the Siddonses to realize they were watching something instrumental to their future in the cattle business. The foundation for Siddons Beefmasters was laid, and from that pivotal sale day forward, the duo began their quest to build a solid program known for producing quality Beefmaster genetics.

In recognition of their program and involvement in LOBBA and other Beefmaster endeavors, the satellite will honor Bob and Bonnie with the 2019 Live Oak Legend Award at their annual bull sale this month.



Photo: The Beefmaster Cowman / January 2019

The Siddons' Arrowhead Ranch is located outside of the small South Texas community of Tilden, not far from the location of that influential first Beefmaster sale they attended. However, their appreciation for the breed and its diversity and relevance in the cattle business dates back to the early 1970s when Bob was initially introduced to Beefmaster.

"A group of friends and I purchased a ranch in the Davis Mountains of West Texas that we called Fox Canyon. The family we purchased the ranch from was running Beefmaster cattle, and on their coffee table was a copy of Laurie Lasater's book about the origin of the breed. It was a very interesting read," Bob said. "Not long after, I started researching different breeds of cattle, trying to determine what we were going to raise, and kept thinking about Beefmaster."

His research led him to call Reyes and Reyes, a well-known sale management firm, to inquire about an upcoming Beefmaster sale. On the other end of that call was someone that would become a lifelong friend and help serve as a catalyst for the Siddons' Beefmaster future. Although Bob had been leaning towards the commercial side of the beef industry, Anthony Mihalski, auctioneer and sale manager, encouraged him to get into the registered Beefmaster business.

"We got to know each other well, and every Monday morning Bob would call and ask how the recent sale went and many other questions. He was studying the breed," Mihalski said. It wasn't long before he invited the Siddonses to their first LOBBA bull sale saying, "Maybe you'll have a little more confidence in registered Beefmaster after watching the sale."

He was right. "Watching that Beefmaster bull sale was when I realized that this breed was for real," Bob said. "If they could sell that many bulls, it was the real deal." And as they say, the rest is history.

The Siddonses built their herd gradually, with diligent research and quality purchases. Their first Beefmaster heifer was purchased at the 1979 LOBBA spring sale. Shortly thereafter, they bought a bull from prominent breeder JB Cobb and then continued adding quality genetics from various breeders for the next several years to expand their herd.

"Bob and Bonnie did it the right way," Mihalski said. "They studied and learned the Beefmaster business and developed a plan before setting about buying those first cattle. Some people buy cattle then try to figure out what they're going to do, but Bob knew. They made the most educated purchases they could because of that plan."

The Siddonses joined Beefmaster Breeders United (BBU) in 1979 and quickly began utilizing BBU programs to continue improving their herd. They've utilized artificial insemination and embryo transfer increasingly in recent years to advance genetics, and today the couple raises around 200 head on their 5,000-acre ranch. They're currently in the process of what Bob refers to as "regrouping" – shifting some important management decisions in their program to better position their herd for progress and producing superior genetics into the future.

"We took our bottom end females and turned them into recipients and are using artificial insemination on the top end females and natural service for what we consider the middle group," he said. "We wanted to upgrade everything and are excited to see how these changes will benefit our program." They have also teamed up with several other breeders in the Galveston Partnership, promoting an up-and-coming herd sire that he feels will have a big impact on the breed.

"We were fortunate and had a good experience starting in the Beefmaster breed, especially thanks to some really good crackerjack bull calves on a Welder cow," Bob said. "We started consigning to sales a couple of years after buying that first bull and have been fortunate to top a number of futurities and sales over the years."

According to Mihalski, the Siddonses "have probably bought more champions off the top end of futurities, both bulls and females, than anybody in the industry. They've always been real believers in high-quality purchases and how those animals will have an impact on their herd and its future."

Involvement Expands Opportunities

The Siddonses have ventured a long way from that initial LOBBA sale, where they didn't know anyone in the Beefmaster business. After many years of dedicated service on BBU committees and the board of directors, Bob recently began a two-year term as BBU president, having previously served as vice president and treasurer. He has also served as co-chair of the Beefmaster Educational Endowment Foundation (B.E.E.F.) fundraising initiative. Bonnie has been extremely active on the BBU Convention Committee over the years, and the couple has graciously given to numerous causes supporting the breed.

They are also longtime members of the Live Oak and South Texas satellites, believing that involvement in these groups would enhance their program and marketing opportunities. Bob has served on both LOBBA and STBBA boards of directors, including terms as president of each satellite, and the duo has actively consigned cattle to many satellite futurities and sales throughout the years.

One of the most important aspects of his LOBBA involvement, Bob said, was helping start the Live Oak Bull Development Test which began in 2013. Two tests are held per year, with consigned bulls tested on a 112-day feeding period, which follows a warm-up period and is concluded with a cool-down period. During the test, an ultrasound is performed on bulls for rib fat, rump fat, ribeye area and percent intramuscular fat. They are also measured for pelvic area, scrotal circumference and hip height.

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The Siddons' Arrowhead Ranch Beefmasters has won numerous awards over the years, including the 2017 Live Oak BBA Futurity & Spring Sale Grand Champion Female; Argyle A. McAllen Ranch Bull Performance Award three years in a row; 2017 Live Oak BBA Member of the Year; and the 2005 Beefmaster Breeders United Environmental Award.

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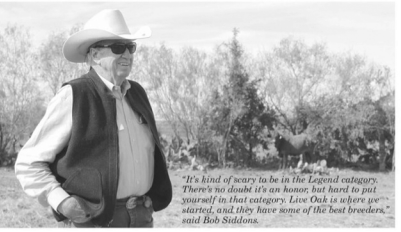
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"I'm glad the bull test is getting better and more bulls are enrolled every year," Bob said. "I think that it's especially important for small breeders to have a place to take their bulls. Bulls are hard to raise and hard to develop properly. You really have to work at it to feed them properly and keep them from fighting."

One major advantage of producers enrolling bulls into the Live Oak gain test is the opportunity for improvement, he said. "A lot of people think they have a good bull until they get over there and see 40 other good bulls. Well, you might realize that yours isn't as good as you thought. But that's how you learn – getting up with the other competition and seeing where you really stand. You can then make improvements and breed for better animals."

Many of the participants in the bull test will consign those animals to the January LOBBA bull sale. "The bull sale is an exciting time and sets the tone for Beefmaster sales for the year," Siddons said. "It includes a very diverse group of bulls and draws buyers from all across the country and internationally."



"It's kind of scary to be in the Legend category. There's no doubt it's an honor, but hard to put yourself in that category. Live Oak is where we started, and they have some of the best breeders," said Bob Siddons.

On a Mission – Diversity Leads to Success

After more than 40 years in the Beefmaster business, raising cattle in two diverse regions (the Siddonses partner in a second ranch in West Texas), Bob believes wholeheartedly that he's in an exceptional position as BBU president to guide the association into the future and help breeders continue reaching a wide range of seedstock and commercial producers. Breed diversity is the key,

he emphasized. "Having ranching operations in two very different parts of the state has given me a unique, first-hand perspective on our breed," he said. "One of the biggest strengths our breed has is our diversity. If all our bulls were exactly alike, I couldn't use our breeders on both of our ranches. Our Masters Mountain ranch has a nearly 3,000-foot elevation change on 10,000 acres. We go from catclaw to

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C1040807
10/03/2013
Bonfire X Miss Sugarbelle

EMS Fire Dancer

Dancing G's Beefmasters
Barb & John Gillespie
3173 CR 271, Moulton, TX 77975
John Gillespie 281.733.0656
barbjohngillespie@att.net
Bruce Robbins 210.861.5136

- EMS Fire Dancer comes from the Emmons Ranch Beefmaster program, which for over 40 years is known for producing quality Beefmaster bulls that sire heavy weaning calves and superior replacement females for the purebred and commercial cattle industry.
- EMS Fire Dancer was sired by Bonfire, the 2010 National Grand Champion Beefmaster Bull, and is a full brother to Fire & Smoke, the 2015 National Grand Champion Beefmaster Bull.
- Fire Dancer carries the genetics of these outstanding Beefmaster bulls as well as the impeccable maternal genetics of his dams that add the bonus of quality replacement females.
- Using Fire Dancer will make a positive difference in your breeding program.
- EMS Fire Dancer has been DNA parent verified and all semen is CSS certified for international export.
- Domestic price is \$35 per straw. International price is \$20 per straw. Minimum purchase of 10 straws.
- Call or e-mail anytime for information.

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BBU News

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Attention Rio Grande Valley JBBA and BBU Members

Join us for a Rio Grande Valley Beefmaster Round-Up! BBU and JBBA representatives will share the latest and greatest Beefmaster news, events, programs and services available to Beefmaster breeders and JBBA members.

The event will be held Friday, Jan. 18 at 6 p.m. at Dr. Alvaro Restrepo's Santa Ana Ranch – 8175 Ramseyer Rd., Edcouch, TX. ★

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pine trees, and for a bull to survive there he needs a 1 underline and should be built like a bull elk. They have to be able to travel because cows are scattered from creek bottoms to high meadows through some pretty rough country.

"Beefmaster diversity allows me to source Beefmaster bulls for two very different parts of Texas and allows Beefmaster cattle to meet the needs of ranchers all across the United States and around the world. If breeders recognize and embrace diversity within the breed, the breed will continue to be relevant to the cattle industry."

This commitment to the Beefmaster breed and its impact in the beef industry is evident in everything the Siddonses have worked for over the last 40 years.

"Given the kind of people that Bob and Bonnie are, and what I've seen them do for Live Oak and other satellites and the entire breed, they are very deserving of the Legend Award," Mihalski said. "And I have no doubt that the Beefmaster breed will be better for him being president. He understands the association, and he'll put his many years of experience wearing so many hats in business to being a good president for us." ★

Saturday, May 4, 2019

Cullman Stockyards • Cullman, AL • 10 AM
75 County Rd. 1339, Cullman, AL • Exit 310 off I-65

SABMG Officers:
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Vice President - Jeff Hedden 256/655-4258
Secretary - Karen Hall 931/652-0138
Treasurer - Cliff Christopher 256/434-0178

www.southernalliancebeefmaster.com

(#1134 Son of Adrenaline)

Bull purchased from Don Bailey

Adrenaline X Lucey Baby

Look for progeny out of this bull at the Southern Alliance Sale in Cullman, Alabama on May 4, 2019.

We welcome inquiries ... please call, email or come visit our ranch for additional information on this bull and our program.

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