

INVOLVED FROM THE BEGINNING

By Martha Hollida Garrett

Ronnie Smith is not a newcomer to SimGenetic cattle. The Simmental breed arrived in the U.S. in 1967 and the American Simmental Association (ASA) was formed in 1968. In 1970, Smith purchased 10 half-blood Simmental heifers. In the early 1990's, he purchased his first Simbrah and the rest is, as they say, history.

Smith grew up with cattle, horses and scrap metal and two of those have continued to be his livelihood. In addition to his cattle operation, he and wife, Susan, own and operate one of the largest scrap metal businesses in the state of Texas.

Raised on a diversified farm near McKinney, Texas, his dad showed American Quarter Horses and was recognized as the oldest existing horse exhibitor at Denver's National Western Livestock Show.

"Dad's long time involvement at the National Western was very well publicized. Good Morning America even did a piece on it, when he died in 2004," says Smith.

Smith, a 1969 Texas Tech marketing graduate, returned home after graduation to work in the family scrap metal busi-



Ronnie and Susan Smith at their business in Fort Worth, Texas.

ness. He was at the Fort Worth Livestock Show in 1970, when he saw his first Simmental cattle.

"I just fell in love with them. There's no other way to describe it and I can still see those first cattle very vividly," he recalls.

Smith's love for the cattle resulted in a site-unseen purchase of ten half-blood heifers from a breeder in Montana shortly after the stock show.

“*Smith grew up with cattle, horses and scrap metal and two of those have continued to be his livelihood.*”

"I sent a college friend in my dad's truck to pick up those heifers in April. On the way home, he became stranded in a snowstorm. He found a place to unload them and he had to wait a week before he could get them back to Texas," says Smith, whose ASA number remains 1754.

Over the next almost 20 years, he maintained a herd of Simmentals on and off, but mostly on as his love affair with them continued. It was during this time that he opened his first scrap metal business in McKinney and he sold the cattle to devote his time to getting the company off the ground.

Then in 1989, he and his wife, Susan purchased the Collier's Diamond C Ranch in Stephenville, Texas and the remaining 20 or so head of Simmental cattle on it. For those new to SimGenetics, the Collier's program was one of the premier Simmental operations in the country and the Diamond C cattle won all the major shows, their sales were events for the breed and enjoying some of, if not the highest averages in the country.



LMC WFC Whitney is a Diva daughter that is part of their embryo transfer program.



The Smiths purchased a one-third interest in Smith Nu Wave II and now have 45 of his daughters headlining their program.

The Smiths moved to the Diamond C and opened a scrap metal business in Stephenville, as well as a location on the northside of Fort Worth. It was also during this time that Smith purchased his first Simbrah cattle from La Muneca Cattle Co., Linn, Texas.

"Ronnie called me in the early 90's, wanting to buy some F-1 Simbrah heifers sired by LMC Money and out of Bravo and 659 daughters. He insisted that I send him a video of the cattle and I told him that the only video camera we owned was a kid's version. He asked me if I understood English and I said 'yes sir'. I told him, I would pay for his plane ticket to come see the cattle. But the next time he asked me if I understood English, I promised him a video. I started at the show barn with two heifers that Victor was showing and I mentioned that these were my son Victor's and that they probably were not for sale. I also mentioned that if Victor were to sell them, he would probably ask around \$7,500 apiece," remembers Carlos Guerra, owner of La Muneca.

Guerra videoed a number of females and sent it to Smith. About three days later, Smith called Guerra unhappy with Susan because she couldn't get the video to work. He then had lots of questions for Guerra about the cattle for sale. After much discussion, Smith would purchase five head of Simbrah from La Muneca including Victor's two show heifers at the asking price.

That was his entrance into Simbrah and he would become very active in both breeds over the next few years. Then in 2006, the business in Fort Worth was growing very rapidly. He and Susan, who handles many responsibilities in all their businesses, were growing very tired of the one-hour each way commute between Fort Worth and Stephenville. They sold the cattle and ranch and moved to the DFW Metroplex area, but Smith never quit following the breeds.

"Then he bought a ranch in New Mexico---a 9.5 hour commute. He stocked it with Simmental influenced Black Baldys. He just couldn't stand it to not own cattle. Obviously we didn't get to New Mexico often enough, so he found a 1,000 acre ranch near Gainesville, located close to Lake Texhoma and we bought it," explains Susan adding that they have since moved to Denton, halfway between Gainesville



Ronnie Smith (r) in his signature felt hat at a recent Simbrah Synergy Sale, with Bill Travis, Pine Ridge Ranch.

and Fort Worth and have another 200 acres there.

Once he bought the Gainesville ranch, which was 2008, he began looking at getting back in the Simbrah business, as he felt they matched the environment of Texas and he needed cattle that were low maintenance due to his business demands.

He returned to La Muneca and made purchases to lay the foundation for what is known today as Smith Farms. He had followed the Pine Ridge Ranch breeding-program over the years and hand-picked 40 heifers initially from the herd and then added another 30 heifers from owners, Bill and Jane Travis. He also visited with Tim Smith of Smith Genetics and made selections from that outfit, including one-third interest in the sire Smith Nu Wave II.

"At that time semen on Nu Wave was selling for \$1,000 a unit, but Ronnie didn't just want to buy semen, he wanted to own a piece of the bull. He has been very firm about his intentions with his program and that is to purchase and produce only the highest quality cattle," describes Tim Smith, Smith Genetics, who serves as a consultant to the Smiths.

He has continued to make purchases from the Synergy, MAS, Elite and \$ellabration offerings. He not only has a purebred Simbrah herd, but is building one of the top percentage Simbrah programs in the breed. They also have a select number of Simmentals they are using to develop new lines of Simbrah.

"We now have 45 Nu Wave II daughters in our herd. We are breeding them to Smith William N Black, a purebred Simmental sire, carrying the genetics of Dream On and Goldmine and Smith Hi Caliber, an up and coming young three-quarter blood sire that carries the genetics of Smith Matt N Black and Smith Bella Bella. We are very excited about this particular group of females. Nu Wave II has been the #1 EPD bull in the breed for several years and his

(Continued on page 32)

Involved...

(Continued from page 23)

progeny have excelled in the show ring and as breeding pieces. They are an integral part of our plan to raise purebred and percentage Simbrah," says Smith.

They plan to keep their numbers at about 125 head going forward and are flushing a select group of donor cows at Smith Genetics. Their donors include daughters of Smith Bella Bella, LMC Miss Diva, PRR Morning Star, and LM She Moves to name a few, and he has purchased embryos and flushes from some of the most noted lines in the breed.

The Smiths enjoy the cattle, the breed and the breeders and for them it's a break from the fast pace of their scrap metal business.

American Recycling Inc. is their company. It employs over 100 people and last year they moved 85 million tons of metal. They buy from small scrap metal yards and act as a wholesale buyer, as well as take in scrap metal from individuals. Their customers include many, who have been buying and selling with them for decades.

"It's a lot like the stock market, as metal is bought and sold globally," explains Susan, adding that the London Metal Exchange sets prices three times a day on copper and aluminum, while steel is priced one time a month.

A visit to the site is impressive. Trucks of all sizes are arriving, carrying all kinds of scrap metal in and then 18-wheeler loads of processed metal are leaving to be delivered

to the nearby rail station to be shipped. Inside the office, multiple transactions are being made and someone is keeping an eye on the computer for up-to-date pricing. It's also loud, as cranes are unloading trucks, highlifts are moving metal and there is a huge shredder converting everything to small shreds. All kinds of appliances, automobile bodies, and steel items are processed onsite before shipping to destinations across the globe.

"About one-third of our volume goes to China. We are also selling a lot to India and we see Vietnam gaining ground as a big customer," adds Susan.

"We like the quiet when we get back to the ranch at night," Smith jokes.

The Smiths have laid an impressive foundation for their program and market their Simbrah largely through the Simbrah Sensation, and are also involved in The Elite and \$ellabration events, as well as the International Sale in Houston.

Smith is one of just a handful of breeders, who started with the Simmental breed in its infancy and is still involved. "I've never quit liking the cattle—even when I didn't own any Simmental or Simbrahs, I was thinking about buying some," he explains adding that he loves auctions and for him it's about winning the bid on the good ones.

"The goal is to retire from the scrap industry, soon I hope and spend even more time with our Simbrah program. We believe in the cattle and think they have a lot to offer the industry," he concludes.



WE'RE YOUR
full service
SHOW SUPPLY
TRAILER COMPANY!

Everything exhibitors need on show day, as well at home, we have in stock in our trailer at the shows.

CALL TODAY

to book us for your event! Now booking for summer and fall 2014. We would love to have our trailer at your event for your exhibitors!

We are affiliated with Sullivan's Show Supply and carry their products and grooming supplies.



Come by and visit us at

the *Elite*

May 24 & 25

Yoakum, Texas



Rocking M Show Supply

Bill R. Meuth, Jr

210.380.1468

stacy@brm-construction.com