

Miniature Hereford Cattle

Australian Miniature Hereford Breeders Network | website: www.amhbn.com | email: amhnetwork@gmail.com



Miniature Hereford Bull

The Santa Gertrudis bull is the same age as the miniature Hereford bull

The origin of Miniature Hereford cattle has its roots in Herefordshire, England. The Miniature Hereford we know today are descendants of pure Hereford stock selectively bred since the 1970's. With the trend at that time being "bigger is better" one particular breeder went against the trend and selectively bred for temperament, hardiness, meat quality and feed conversion. Herefords are classed as miniature Herefords if:

- ◆ The animal is **registered with HAL**
- ◆ Their **frame score is ONE** or less at age 3 years (International Standards).

Buyers should ensure any cattle they purchase are **registered with Herefords Australia.**

LOCAL BREEDER CONTACT DETAILS

The Largent Heritage



The Largent family owns a significant Miniature Hereford herd in the United States and is generally considered the founders of the breed. The Largent heritage still continues in Australia

Miniature Herefords today owe their existence to one stubborn family and over 35 years of careful, selective breeding. It all started at the Denver stock show back in 1970 when, for the first time in history, the judge was allowed to carry the entries' height/weight information in hand while judging the class.

R. Rust Largent, Jr. "Grandpa" was not impressed, for in his opinion, you weren't much of a cattleman if you had to look at numbers to tell which cow was superior to the other. When the judge of that show went on to place the class strictly by height, Grandpa was so disgusted he nearly ruined his good hat! But, instead of bowing to the new fad of the time, he chose to buck the "bigger is better" mentality and continue breeding the stocky, easy keeping, small Herefords he always had.

Later that year, his son, Roy R. Largent III decided to try breeding for Miniature Herefords. Everyone else seemed to be breeding for the largest possible bovine, why not see how small the same breed could get?

This idea was due in part to the rise in popularity of small acreage farms, or "ranchettes". So many people were leaving the big cities to live on 5-15 acre country homes, they would want a small, gentle animal as a pet, agricultural tax exemption status, and the more adventurous may even want to raise their own beef. The average Hereford was getting too large for one family to consume in a year, and certainly too difficult to handle without proper equipment. Also, a minimum number of cattle were usually required before agricultural exemption can be obtained. With the small acreages and limited pasture land, the large Herefords would be overcrowded. Small animals would eat far less than their modern-sized counterparts, and thrive in smaller environments.

And so, beginning with five cows and one bull, the Largents began a major breeding experiment. Of difficulties and discouragement, there were plenty. But in 1981 the first true Miniature Hereford bull was born. His name was LS REAL MT 3 (Herd ID# 0015) and he is present in the genealogy of almost every Miniature Hereford alive today.

During the 80's, the Largents had built up a nice herd of Miniatures, but because they were the only breeder, there

were no outside genetics available to increase the numbers and quality of their little herd.

Fortunately, they discovered a ranch in Kentucky that had been line breeding Herefords for over 40 years. These cows were of the old chunky style prominent in the 60's, and were a valuable addition to the original Largent herd. An initial purchase of 20 heifers provided unrelated genetics to complement the quickly growing herd of Miniatures.

Separate bloodlines or "Cow Families" were developed to ensure quality genetics even after years of close breeding. The original families are designated with a colored tag, the newer lines are designated with a letter in the ID number.

The first private treaty sale of any Miniature Hereford was in 1989. Interest was quickly sparked, and people began to want the Minis for their own. Shows specifically for Miniature Herefords were organized, and entries competed against each other. The animals were not judged merely by height but by the individual's quality, thickness, depth, stockiness and other traits that once were synonymous with the word Hereford.

Then in 1996 LS MT OAK 6150 "Toughy" was born, and is considered the "King of the Largent Miniature Herefords". He gave balance and quality to the 000 sized cattle, and was used extensively at Point of Rocks for many years until his death in January of 2005.

One year later, two herd sires of the 0000 size were born, namely, LS Mt Oak 5050 "Half-Pint" and LS Mt Oak 5340 "Max". Both these bulls had the conformation necessary to begin breeding for the next step smaller in size.

Miniature Herefords arrived in Australia in 1997. There was one live shipment and quite a few other breeder's imported semen and embryos. The national herd has been slowly building ever since.

Some Australian breeders have been using Australian genetics to introduce Australian style miniature Herefords and also poll Miniature Herefords. The Largents have also continued to diversify their genetics and have also introduced poll Miniature Herefords.

MEASURING MINIATURES

AN EXTRACT FROM THE AMERICAN MINIATURE HEREFORD NEWSLETTER.

Measurement of your miniatures can be taken straight across the hipbones. The hip height can vary an inch or so depending on whether the animal is standing correctly on its back legs or keeps its back straight (not sagging or humped up). For the past few years, here at the Point of Rocks Ranch, we have taken both the hip and shoulder height of our Miniature Herefords. The hip height is definitely the more accurate of the two measurements. This is reinforced by the fact that the standard sized cattle go by the hip measurement. Also the shoulder height can increase after 3 years of age, where the hip height will usually stabilise at that age.

There are several instruments made for measuring cattle height. They are usually made of metal with a sliding tube inside a larger tube and a level mounted on a horizontal arm at the top. Another type resembles a regular tape measure with a level attached to a bar for placing on the animal's back. An inexpensive homemade measuring stick can be made from PVC pipe. We use a reamed out T to slide up and down a pipe with a horizontal piece glued to the leg of the T. This is then placed over the back of the animal. Make permanent marks on the pipe for a quicker reading. When using the frame height charts to predict the future height of a calf it must be remembered that many factors influence the growth rate. The primary factor is genetics. Some calves

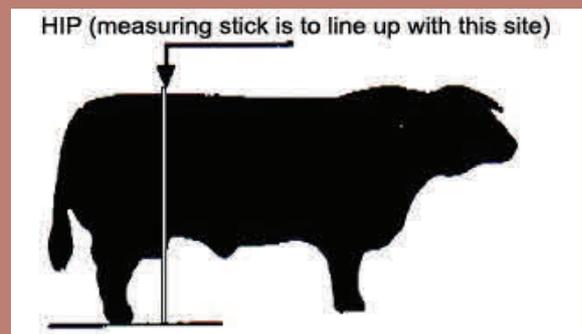
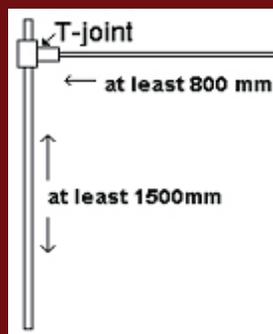
grow

quickly when they are young then taper off at eighteen months, maturing an inch or so shorter than expected. Other calves grow slowly and continue to grow after they are two, maturing out an inch or so bigger than you expected.

Another factor that changes the growth rate is nutrition. Of course, if a calf does not receive proper nutrition it can become stunted, therefore having a deceptive reading when you use the chart to estimate the mature height. On the other hand a mature cow can measure a couple of inches taller than her actual frame score if she is excessively fat.

Six months of age is the earliest you should begin measuring your calves. By the time they are twelve months old you can get a better projection of their mature height.

It's pretty standard knowledge in the cattle industry that if you wait until a heifer is three years old before she has her first calf, then she will grow a little bigger than a heifer that has calved at two years old.



AVERAGE FRAME SCORES (Heights in inches. All animals to scale)

Modern 7 - 58"

Classic 2 - 48"

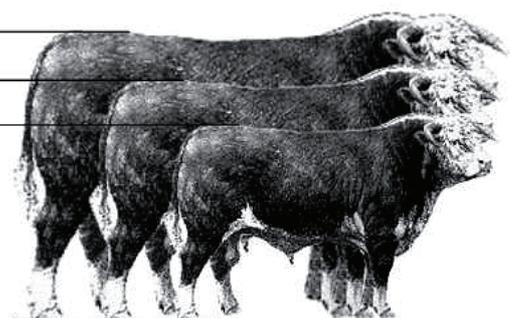
Miniature 000 - 38"



Modern 7 - 10"

Classic 2 - 50"

Miniature 000 - 40"



Miniature Hereford Cattle Breed Standards

SIZE OF MINIATURE HEREFORD

No animal larger than a frame score 1, will be accepted as a Miniature Hereford. There is no official minimum frame size.

CONFORMATION

Rear view

Feet set straight forward with the toes not pointing in or out - legs set well apart with the hock joints not turned in or out, thus forming parallel lines with the lines of the sides - the length of bone from hoof to hock joint is to be short in proportion to the depth of body above - that depth of body will show in the crotch which should be as near to the hock joints as possible - broad at the stifle joint area with the same thickness carrying upward to the hip joints and that width showing across the top - fullness around the tail head, not sloping off on the sides - top width carrying forward through the loin area, narrowing only slightly at the shoulders.

Side view

From rear to front - back legs: straight but not post legged, showing a slight bend at the hock joint, standing on short toes and not coon footed - lower leg muscles protruding to the rear just above the hock joint showing depth of quarter and heavy muscle - the rear vertical line of this muscle when carried upward should be perpendicular with the ground - the top and bottom line should parallel - the bottom line being below the stifle and elbow joints showing depth of body - the top line should not show the tail head protruding up or sloping down but may show a slight rise in the loin area and definitely not show to be low in the loin or sag behind the shoulders - front legs: standing on a short hoof and again not coon footed - straight legs not bowing forward or backward at knee joint with the length from the foot to the knee being very short compared to total height - shoulder height may be slightly lower than hip

height on younger animals, being more near the same height in older animals - brisket deep between front legs becoming trim under throat - neck short blending well into the shoulder with shoulder point not protruding - a slight hump on top of a short neck is permitted on older bulls - the top of a short head should be held slightly higher than the top of shoulder - no undershot of lower jaw permitted.

Front view

Head broad and short, broad muzzle and broad between the eyes - eyes near the front but on side of head, not sunken in or overly protruding, but prominent - horn tips on older animals below level of the top of the head - standing straight on front feet with the toes not pointing either in or out - feet set well apart with a well filled brisket.

IN GENERAL

Chunky in appearance - close to the ground, expressed with short legs (from the knee and hock to the ground) - entire animal well balanced and well proportioned, not appearing too heavy or too light in front or rear but slightly heavier in rear - the bone structure not too small or too large but slightly heavier than light, giving ample surface for muscle attachment - head not too large or too small, but smaller than large, and showing masculine or feminine appearance - the visible reproduction organs to be well developed for age.

MARKINGS

The entire face, white, with some pigment around the eyes but not in excess - white under the chin continuing down under the brisket continuing underneath the belly all the way back through the rear flank area with white showing slightly from each side in the fore and aft flanks - white from the feet up on all four legs, stopping before the knee and hock joints are reached - the ears and in between show pigment with a strip of white

starting just behind the ears proceeding back on top of the neck to the shoulder point area - only the tail bush is white - the balance of body marking and the mentioned pigmented areas may vary from light, but not pale, to dark, but not black - the entire scrotum should show pigment.

A comparison of the two Grand Champions at the Hobart Show.

The Hereford bull Red Hill Bentley 1065kg and Mini Hereford Kinkanga. Duke 418kg. Duke is a 3 year old, Bentley 2 year old.



Note: Many of the above conformation statements are not in accord with those used to judge the modern standard sized Herefords or other breeds. For this reason, it would be beneficial to make a copy of the above available to anyone who is to judge Miniature Herefords.