

Purebred vs. Commercial Cattle



The beef cattle industry encompasses different types of production, interests and passions. This offers a great amount of flexibility within the industry.

Here is an overview of the difference between PUREBRED AND COMMERCIAL CATTLE.

PUREBRED

- Purebred (registered, pedigree documented)
- Raised to produce breeding stock
- Managed intensively
- Records kept (birth weight, weaning weight, calving difficulties, etc.)
- Producers belong to a breed association
- Utilize technologies-Artificial Insemination (AI), carcass ultrasounds, DNA testing
- Detailed breeding records
- Supplemental feed may be given
- Bottom end calves are culled, sold as steers or market heifers
- Some calves kept as herd replacements or sold as breeding stock
- Bulls are sold to purebred or commercial cattlemen for herd improvement

COMMERCIAL

- A cross between different breeds (generally w/o documented pedigree)
- Specifically bred (producer selects breeds used to create them)
- Managed less intensively
- Records kept (not as many traits measured, but may record birth and weaning weights)
- Artificial insemination (AI) is used in some herds, mainly on first calf heifers
- Herd bulls are largely used
- Supplemental feed not often given, cattle and calves are raised mainly on grass and hay during winter
- Heifer calves may be sold as breeding stock or as market heifers
- Bull calves are steered and sold either at weaning or finished and sold as beef

These are general descriptions, but within even these two groups there are many different variations. Depending on location and available pasture/feed, markets, the farmer's strength and weaknesses, and other factors, these operations can be adjusted to meet demand.