

ISA BEEFMASTERS

Promoting Beefmasters Worldwide since 1964

the isa informer

SPRING
2017

isabeefmasters.com

Navigate road to success with the *Six Essentials*

By Lorenzo Lasater, President

A dogged pursuit of economically vital traits defines the creation of the Beefmaster breed. My grandfather Tom Lasater crafted the Beefmaster breed under the guidance of his own Lasater Philosophy, or the *Six Essentials*, an economical roadmap for the selection of beef cattle. Although a common thread in all modern beef production today, his ideas were considered revolutionary—and some said crazy—at the time.



Today when cattle folks visit our ranch to see cattle and discuss ideas, the conversation inevitably turns to the *Six Essentials* and how we deploy them in daily operations. Although it is simple to profess allegiance to the concept, it is much more difficult to wield it as the powerful selection weapon it is. I thought it might be useful to outline a few of the tools Isa Beefmasters employs to weave the *Six Essentials* throughout our breeding program and management. While some are so obvious as to appear simplistic, others might come as a bit of a surprise.

Fertility

Fertility is the cornerstone of the *Six Essentials*. With a fertile herd, all the other pieces of the puzzle fall into place. So how do you build fertility into your cowherd? The first piece is so simple many fail to see it—a defined breeding season. If cattle are expected to raise a calf every year (meaning optimum and maximum production), they must have a breeding season of 90 days or fewer. Gestation length in cattle is 280 days, or nine months. This leaves only 90 days for involution (recovery) and



Breeding our cattle in multiple-sire herds means our bulls must compete to breed—just like yours do.

rebreeding. In a breeding season longer than 90 days, a percentage of the females cannot calve annually.

The breeding season, of course, means nothing if you don't take the next critical step—eliminating from the herd those females that don't raise a calf each year. If you adhere to a defined breeding season, pregnancy test and cull accordingly, the fertility of your herd will begin to increase each year, as the less fertile are eliminated and the replacement heifers become increasingly fertile.

In the Isa Beefmasters herds, we follow a 60-day season. This shorter season balances the selection for fertility while still giving a reasonable timeframe for cows to become pregnant—they basically have as many as three cycles to breed.

For an added twist in the selection of individuals, we

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Navigate road to success



We moderate extreme growth, instead choosing to balance weight with other elements of performance.

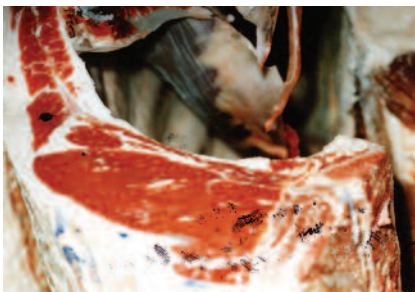
Continued from front

emphasize choosing sons and daughters of first-calf heifers. These cattle exemplify early maturity and calving ease, which amplifies the progress of fertility within the herd.

A final consideration regarding fertility—and one that makes Beefmasters completely unique among beef breeds—is population genetics. We breed our cattle in multiple-sire herds, meaning our bulls must compete to breed, just like they will in our customers' commercial beef operations. We began using DNA for sire identification more than 20 years ago, when it first became commercially available. This information gives us the incredible luxury of employing population genetics and still knowing who the sires are. There is a tremendous variation in libido and breeding effectiveness among bulls. We want to identify those dominant breeders and propagate their fertile genetics.

Weight

Weight seems obvious: Cow-calf operations sell pounds of beef, so more is always better, right? Actually, no! Weight is a delicate balance, and we strive to produce *optimum*—rather



Beefmasters have lean, tender beef and high-yielding carcasses.

than maximum—weights in cattle. Extremely growthy cattle, Beefmasters easily move the needle for weight, which is a highly heritable genetic trait. We measure and select for weight in many ways: We take weaning and yearling weights and track the corresponding

EPDs for both. In the Isa Beefmasters Bull Performance Test, we put all our developing bulls through both grass and feed

gain tests. If we select the heaviest and highest gaining bulls in both those phases, what will happen over generations of cattle? They get bigger!

Large females require more maintenance and have difficulty rebreeding under tough conditions. We ranch in low-rainfall, semi-desert country, where conditions frequently *are* tough. So I constantly strive to balance optimum weight with performance, while trying to moderate extreme growth by selecting for type rather than pure weight. Tom Lasater called this selection for type *conformation*, the next of our *Six Essentials*.

Conformation

Simply put, conformation refers to the visual appraisal of a live animal with regard to carcass merit and production efficiency. We critically examine animals for thickness and muscling, structural correctness, appropriate size and masculinity or femininity. Also especially important is freedom from structural or genetic cosmetic defects, for example a crooked nose, post legs, poorly formed testicles, long sheath, weak back, etc. Fleshing ability also falls under conformation. We deem a cow lacking if she is in poor condition relative to her peers.

Milk Production

We select for milk production in a couple of basic ways. It is important to note that, once again, we strive for *optimum* production. Too little milk and calf weight and quality suffer; too much milk and the energy required to produce the excess is stolen from other areas, such as the cow's own body condition or reproduction.

The first and most obvious way of measuring milk production is examining weaning weight. If you are trying to reduce cow size, you can dig a little deeper by figuring what percent of a cow's body weight her calf represents at weaning. A cow



We strive for balanced, *optimum* milk production, maintaining the health of both the calf *and* the cow.

Success with *Six Essentials*



Beefmasters thrive in all kinds of harsh climates—from humid tropics to rugged deserts and frigid mountains and plains. These herds are surviving—and thriving—in (clockwise from top left) Florida, Costa Rica, Colorado and Nevada.

weighing 1000 pounds and weaning a 600-pound calf is much more efficient than a 1500-pound cow weaning the same calf. Milk EPDs also reflect her genetic ability to produce milk.

Another simple tool for managing milk production in the pasture is to identify and eliminate any cow that raises a poor-quality calf, an indicator of low milk and/or poor mothering ability. It goes without saying we must eliminate any dry cows and those that orphan their calves.

Hardiness

Hardiness refers to the animal's ability to thrive in difficult conditions with low maintenance costs. Beefmasters absolutely dominate other cattle breeds in hardiness, which is one of the reasons for their popularity in many cattle regions worldwide characterized by harsh climates (desert, tropical, hot, humid) and low infrastructure. If you can't easily buy cow feed, you need cows that can survive without!

Disease and insect resistance also fall under the hardiness umbrella. Beefmasters enjoy an innate "wellness" that stems from many generations of not being pampered. Tom Lasater quit using insecticides decades ago, with the theory that some cattle are more naturally resistant to parasites than others. He believed that cattle with lower resistance would fail to rebreed and, thus, remove themselves from the herd. Over many generations, this self-sufficiency will impact the herd's genetic resistance to disease and insects significantly.

So how do we select for hardiness? Already we have discussed eliminating poor doers, such as thin cows or orphan calves and their mothers. Management also plays an important role. We all enjoy being good to our cattle, but we also must be mindful of the economics of pampering cattle, which has both a financial

and genetic cost. If you pamper cattle too much, you allow less desirable individuals to remain in the herd and therefore lose genetic traction. Forcing cattle to succeed regardless of their conditions improves the ingrained hardiness of your herd most rapidly, allowing you to see which ones rise to meet the challenge and which ones fail.

Disposition

Gentle cattle handle better, breed better, feed better, slaughter better and generally are nicer to spend time with than wild, nervous or ill-tempered cattle. We select for disposition by teaching cattle good manners when handling them and also by not tolerating bad behavior. We have all seen the wild cow teaching her young calf to act the same way. Part nature and part nurture, that behavior does not belong in our herd. You'll find that if you eliminate the worst offenders, the rest of the cattle quickly settle down.

One other concept I'll discuss under disposition is intelligence. I truly believe, and have seen it verified many times by others, that Beefmasters are smarter than other breeds. They are calm, responsive and almost eager to please. We have all had the experience of trying to put a herd of cattle through a gate. It always takes a calm and reasonable lead cow to start the flow in the way we are asking. We hope to propagate those pleasant, intelligent dispositions in our cattle.

A simple and effective roadmap, the *Six Essentials* guides us to economical cattle breeding and management. Incredibly, these tools are not limited to Beefmasters but can be applied to other types of cattle, or even other types of livestock. Success with the *Six Essentials* simply requires a willingness to work with nature to hold cattle accountable. Reaping both the financial and genetic rewards more than justifies the extra effort.

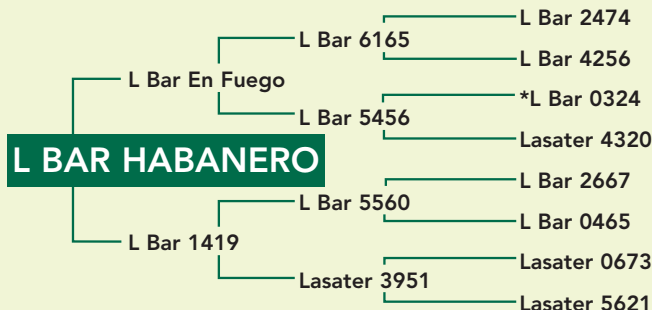


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SPRING GENETICS SPECIALS

\$30 EACH ON 10+ STRAWS – ANY COMBINATION

See website for additional sires available. Quantity limited on some sires. All certificates \$10. Freight additional. Expires 6/1/17.



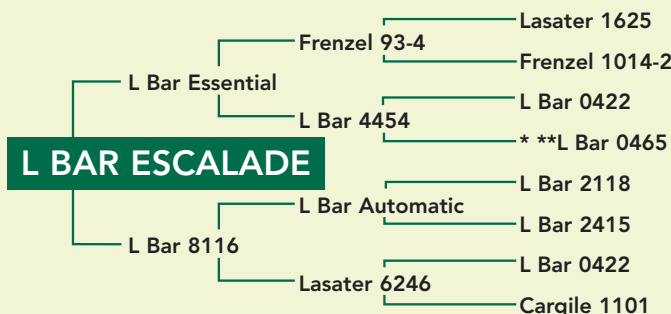
Put some *heat* in your program with **L Bar Habanero**. This polled En Fuego son has been a top performer in every phase of his development, including earning one of the highest scores in both grass gains and marbling (IMF) in the Isa Performance Test. L Bar Habanero has excellent EPDs—ranking in the top 5% of the breed in 5 of 9 EPDs—and a perfect disposition. In the Maternal and Terminal Profit Indices, you'll see Habanero provides a huge boost!

L BAR HABANERO




DNA #6315055299 PV		Classified U1/1								Reg. # C1038019			
EPD	CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	TMAT	MCE	SC	REA	IMF	\$T	\$M	
Habanero	3.3	1	40	63	6	26	2.8	1.3	.5	.2	\$111	\$29	
% Rank			5%	5%		20%		1%	10%	5%	5%	10%	

Owned by Bertrand, Fuller, Haymond, Lasater



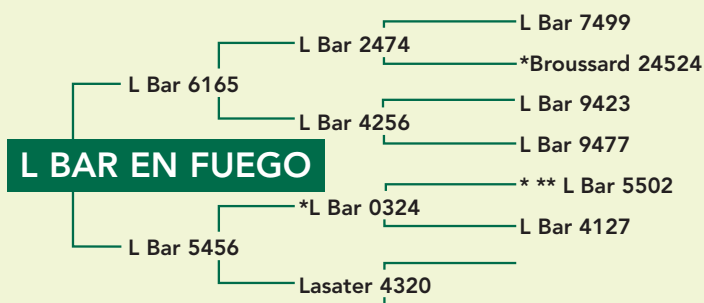
If you are looking to scale new heights of performance, **L Bar Escalade** is your man! He is the son of the great L Bar Essential and Lorenzo's favorite cow, an Automatic daughter. He has the best EPDs of all our semen sires—hitting the top 20% of the breed in all 12 EPDs and the top 5% in eight of those! Escalade is moderate-framed and super clean with a straight top. On top of all that, he'll eat out of your hand.

L BAR ESCALADE



DNA #713403A PV		Classified U1/2								Reg. # C1028230			
EPD	CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	TMAT	MCE	SC	REA	IMF	\$T	\$M	
Escalade	5.7	-1.3	42	72	11	32	3.6	1.1	.6	.2	\$125	\$33	
% Rank	10%	10%	5%	5%	15%	5%	20%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	

Owned by Coughatta Tribe of Louisiana



L Bar En Fuego (*On Fire*) was the best bull to come through the 2011 Isa Test. A polled herdsire, he blends our two most prominent sire lines in L Bar 5502 and L Bar 7499. En Fuego has ideal conformation, as evidenced by a BBU classification of U 1/1. He was also one of the very top carcass bulls in this class, with an IMF ratio of 1.21%! He's straight topped, perfectly muscled and clean underneath—he's got the look!

* Pacesetter **Typesetter

L BAR EN FUEGO



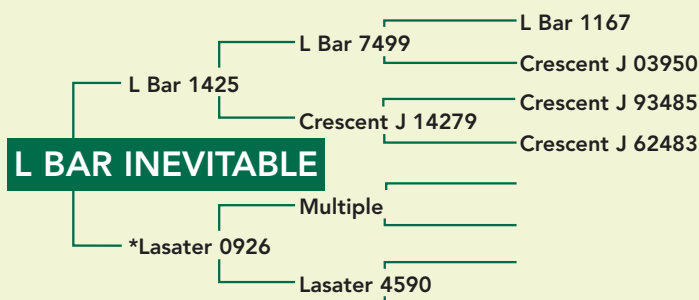
DNA#549728A PV		Classified U1/1								Reg. # C988569			
EPD	CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	TMAT	MCE	SC	REA	IMF	\$T	\$M	
En Fuego	3.9	-.2	30	46	7	22	3.6	1.7	.41	.4	\$83	\$0	
% Rank			15%				20%	1%	20%	1%		5%	

Owned by Willie Earl Washington

SPRING GENETICS SPECIALS


\$30 EACH ON 10+ STRAWS – ANY COMBINATION

See website for additional sires available. Quantity limited on some sires. AI certificates \$10. Freight additional. Expires 6/1/17.



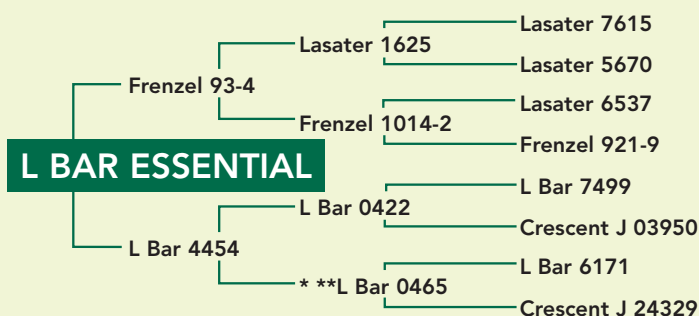
Blending three great line-bred herds, **L Bar Inevitable** brings the best of L Bar, Crescent J and Lasater herds. This athletic bull boasts a super-strong top, clean underline and thickness demanded in the modern industry. A top carcass bull, he gained a whopping 5.7 pounds per day during the Isa Gain Test. His dam is a Pacesetter Award winner.

L BAR INEVITABLE




DNA #341999A PV		Classified U1/1								Reg. # C954343			
EPD	CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	TMAT	MCE	SC	REA	IMF	\$T	\$M	
Inevitable	1	1.1	24	47	14	.26	2.4	-.7	.48	.3	\$84	\$11	
% Rank					1%	15%		15%	1%				

Owned by Wingate Ranch



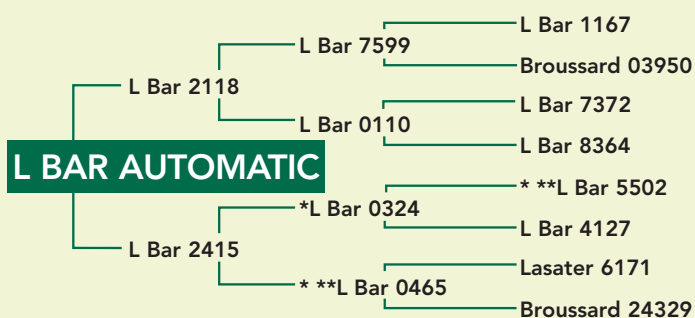
This exceptionally thick and clean herdsire will bring the qualities you need to your cow herd. Out of a top Frenzel herdsire and a wonderful L Bar cow, **L Bar Essential** is probably one of the best Maternal sires we've raised. You won't believe how good his heifers are! Blending low birthweight, high growth and excellent carcass, he epitomizes balance.

L BAR ESSENTIAL




DNA #342021A PV		Classified U1/1								Reg. # C954335			
EPD	CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	TMAT	MCE	SC	REA	IMF	\$T	\$M	
Essential	3.7	-.7	28	61	10	24	3.9	.4	.63	.1	\$107	\$13	
% Rank		20%		10%		20%	10%		5%	15%	10%		

Owned by Dwight Bertrand



Take a look at the birthweight EPD! **L Bar Automatic** exemplifies the moderate, clean frame packed with muscle. He has a smooth top, perfect underline and brilliant red color. He is a son of a first-calf heifer and the great L Bar 2118 and boasts of L Bar 0324 and 5502 in his ultra-strong pedigree.

L BAR AUTOMATIC



DNA#187508A PV		Classified U1/2								Reg. # C914725			
EPD	CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	TMAT	MCE	SC	REA	IMF	\$T	\$M	
Automatic	5.7	-1.5	36	51	8	26	3.7	.9	.03	.1	\$87	\$33	
% Rank	10%	10%	10%	20%		15%	15%	5%		15%	20%	5%	

Owned by Coughatta Tribe of Louisiana

SPRING GENETICS SPECIALS

L BAR EMBRYOS

\$350 EACH

Featuring L Bar Habanero, Escalade and L Bar En Fuego plus top L Bar dams. See website for additional donors.

L BAR 2409



Sire: L Bar En Fuego

Dam: L Bar 2432*

EPD	CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	TMAT	MCE	SC	REA	IMF	\$T	\$M
2409	7.4	-2	24	39	8	20	3.5	1.1	.32	.3	\$71	\$27

L BAR 3454



Sire: L Bar 8421

Dam: Lasater 4270

EPD	CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	TMAT	MCE	SC	REA	IMF	\$T	\$M
3454	7.4	-2	11	33	6	12	5.2	.3	.23	.3	\$59	\$5

L BAR 2404



Sire: L Bar Essential

Dam: L Bar 9238*

EPD	CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	TMAT	MCE	SC	REA	IMF	\$T	\$M
2404	5.2	-.9	32	56	10	26	3.7	.4	.58	.1	\$98	\$22

* Pacesetter

The riddle of the

By Lorenzo Lasater, President

Of all the Beefmaster travel pictures I've posted, none has generated as much interest as this photo (right) featuring the Pyramids of Giza. Therefore, I thought I would share some insights from my trip to Egypt.

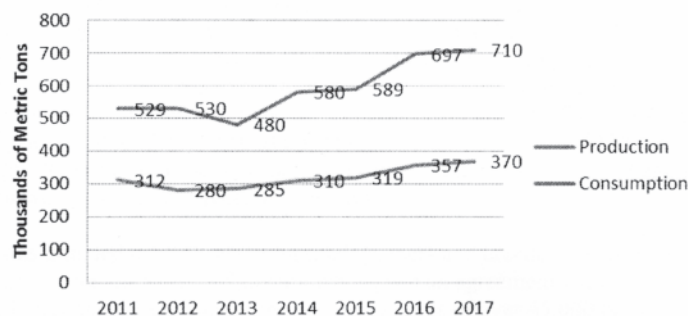
We wouldn't normally think of Egypt as a big beef-producing country. But Egypt has a wonderfully productive agricultural belt along the Nile River, which runs the length of the country and splits into two large rivers north of Cairo, creating a fertile and productive delta. We've all heard of the "Egyptian cotton" that is produced in this region. Sadly, much of the land is badly managed and underutilized. More critically, a lot of the production is "dual purpose," or beef and dairy out of the same cattle, which limits the efficiency of both products.

There are around 5 million cows in Egypt (beef and dairy), and forecasters predict a 2017 calf crop of 1.85 million. However, Egypt's consumption outpaces its production by almost double—you can see in the chart below that the consumption shortfall is 340,000 metric tons. Because of this shortage, they import about 300,000 feeder calves annually.

My visit to Egypt all started when I was asked to give a presentation to the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture about Beefmasters, which are perfectly suited to improved beef production in a hot, dry climate. The Egyptian government is very interested in importing better genetics (semen and embryos) for beef production, as well as live replacement heifers. Our agent for North Africa and Europe, Tamer Elemery, of



Figure 1: Egypt's Beef Production and Consumption 2011-2017



Source: FAS Cairo

Egypt imports approximately 300,000 feeder calves annually to offset its beef production shortfall.

e Sphinx ... and the Beefmaster

Emacon, runs an extensive business importing feeder cattle from outside the country, primarily Eastern Europe. While I was there, he had a ship inbound from Brazil with 5000 head on it! I am excited about our collaboration in this region.

I really didn't know what to expect from Egypt on my first foray into the Middle East, but I found the people to be warm and gracious and very Western-friendly. Surprisingly, they are very pro-Trump. Obama's "Arab Spring" allowed the Muslim Brotherhood to take over Egypt, and ousting them turned out to be a very bloody and painful process. Today, they are actively fighting Isis on their borders. I think Egypt is a true ally to the United States.

A very beautiful city, Cairo boasts many modern hotels, museums and restaurants. The Pyramids of Giza are, literally, on the edge of town. Egypt is working desperately to reestablish the tourism from Western countries that was lost following the Arab Spring. I felt very safe the entire trip, even though it is very different culturally. I would not hesitate to recommend a trip to Cairo to any reasonably adventurous traveler.

On the long trip home, I was pondering my Beefmaster travels. One of the greatest blessings of my career has been having the opportunity to travel to 14 different countries carrying the Beefmaster flag. As in the case of Egypt, I often



Although there were horses available, I did what any self-respecting rancher would do—mounted a camel for my tour of the Pyramids of Giza.

just go when the opportunity presents itself, even if it is not clear what the payoff might be. Growing up, I was never certain what my role in the Beefmaster story would be. Preceding generations all served an important purpose: Great Grandfather Ed Lasater put together the land and cattle that served as the foundation, and my grandfather Tom Lasater developed the Beefmaster breed. My dad, Laurie, drove the breed to national prominence and began expanding internationally. Unexpectedly, it appears my own role may be to help spread the Beefmaster gospel around the world. A well-suited task for me, I find it very gratifying to see the breed and the Lasater Philosophy take hold in new and different—and sometimes very surprising—ranching communities.



Standing beside the Nile River with our agent and host, Tamer Elemery, who runs a large cattle importing operation.



One of the world's oldest statues, the mysterious Sphinx is believed to have been constructed c. 2550 BC.

L Bars in Argentina



Lorenzo Etchegaray of Argentina shared the following on Isa embryos: "Here they are!!! Talk about genetics—all embryos were born before 282 days of gestation.

The newborn calves are very vivacious; they follow their mother in an excellent way. A 2- to 3-day-old calf seems like a 15- to 20-day-old local calf."



Spring Cattle for Sale

17 Fall-calving Cows

3- and 4-year-olds

Calving Aug–Sept for 60 days

AI to L Bar Habanero

For more info, please contact Lorenzo at 325.656.9126.

Isa Beefmasters is very proud to have had **106 L Bar cows** receive the coveted BBU Pacesetter award. These cows calved by 30 months of age, had at least three consecutive calves with a weaning ratio of 105 or better AND maintained a calving interval of 375 days or less.

BBU publishes the trait leaders for each of the EPDs, and there are 59

L Bar bulls or sons of L Bar bulls that are trait leaders in the Beefmaster breed. That is an unprecedented 33% of all **trait leaders for the entire breed**—more than any other breeding establishment! We are also the proud producer of a number of the breed's most influential sires, such as L Bar 5502, WPR's Total Package and L Bar En Fuego.



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