

FROM A STUD BREEDER

Boran cross-breeding YIELDS RESULTS

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The results of the Beef Genomics Program (BGP) which showed that the Boran breed is genetically far removed from the other breeds in South Africa is strong evidence to support the use of Boran bulls to maximise beef production in commercial cross-bred cattle. The impressive results Vastrap Boran has achieved using the Boran in its commercial cross-breeding herd (with Angus) further demonstrates the strong hybrid vigour pure bred Boran bring to the table.

In 2019, the Vastrap commercial F1 Boran/Angus herd which were bred back to Angus stud bulls recorded the best ever cow:calf wean ratios on the farm. The group yielded an average cow:calf wean ratio of 53% for females (with every single female calf exceeding 48%) and 57% for the male calves, with only one calf below the 48% level.

CROSS-BREEDING STRATEGY

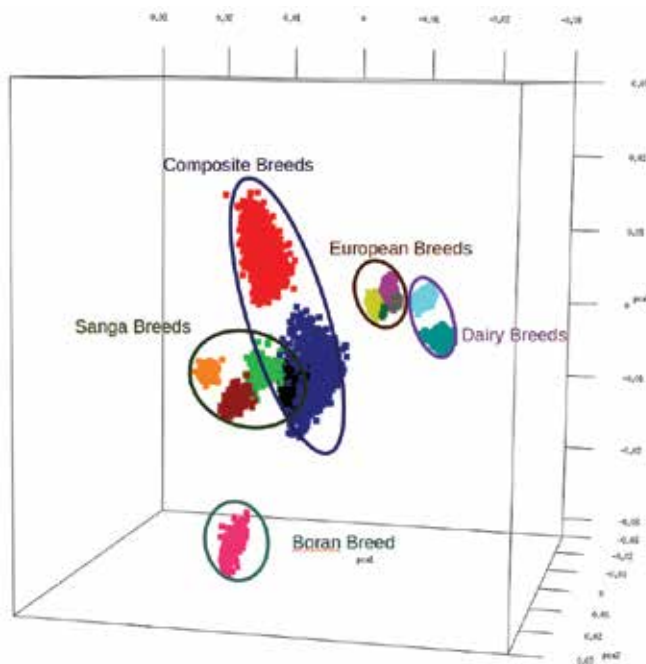
The advantages of cross-breeding are well documented and can have a big impact on your net return. Heterosis (hybrid vigor) and using breeds that are complementary (have different strengths) can have many advantages. Data released by the USDA demonstrates the benefits of cross-breeding across a range of indicators: 6% higher calving; 4% higher calf survival, 8% increase in efficiency; 38% increase in longevity; and 23% increase in lifetime productivity (USDA Cattle Inventory Report, January 2012).

The Boran and the Angus breeds complement each other very well. The Boran has all the strengths we have come to know and love such as hardiness, ability to fatten off the veld, ability to maintain body condition in harsh environments, resistance to diseases, longevity and higher stocking levels, while the Angus is well known for its meat quality, weaning weight, growth rate and is highly sought after by feedlots.

At Vastrap we follow a simple ongoing two-way cross strategy. In the first stage a Boran bull is put on Angus cows. The F1 heifers (50/50) from this combination are put back to Angus bulls to produce a (75/25) Angus/Boran offspring. The retained females from this combination are bred back to Boran bulls, which in turn yields (62.5/37.5) Boran/Angus to be bred back to Angus bulls and so forth.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MEASUREMENT

Measurement is critical to the improvement of any cattle herd as it helps to identify the best and worst animals each year. Vastrap monitors and measures its commercial herds in the same way as its stud herds. Animals are kept in same-age groups, all cattle are tagged, birth records are kept, all calves and cows are weighed at weaning. This enables one to make informed decisions about which cattle to cull and even more importantly, which heifers to keep as replacement stock based on their own wean indexes,



Commercial cross-bred weaner:
F1 Boran Angus bred back to Angus bull



F1 Boran/Angus heifers at weaning

their wean weight as a percentage of their mother's weight and the mother's ICP and historical weaning indexes.

IMPRESSIVE WEANING RESULTS

The table below shows the average wean ratios for male and female calves from the Vastrap F1 Boran/Angus cows cross bred back to Angus bulls in 2019. These are the best ever wean results in any Vastrap herd in 20 years of record keeping!

Historically, in the extensive farming conditions at Vastrap, females weaning at more than 45% of the mother's body weight and males at more than 48% have been considered excellent. Cows that produce these results are marked as A-grade for that breeding season. This group of Boran/Angus cross-bred animals far outperformed this benchmark with an average cow:calf ratio of 53% for females (with every single female calf exceeding 48%!) and 57% for the male calves with only one calf below the 48% level.



Cross-bred heifers: 75% Angus & 25% Boran

2019 Weaning Averages: F1 (50/50) cow with Angus/Boran calf (75/25)		
	Female	Male
Weaning Age	216.5 days	211.9 days
Live Weight	252.5kg	279.1kg
Adjusted weight (210 days)	246.8kg	278.1kg
Cow:Calf ratio	53%	57%
Source: Vastrap Boran		

Female Weaning Data:

F cow with Angus/Boran calf (75/25)

#	DAM weight	Calf weight	RATIO	INDEX	ADJ WEIGHT	DAYS OLD
	01-May-19					
1	437	192	48%	84%	211	184
2	474	263	49%	93%	232	247
3	465	235	50%	93%	233	212
4	410	265	58%	96%	239	240
5	428	252	56%	96%	241	223
6	450	284	54%	98%	245	254
7	520	220	48%	100%	250	177
8	523	246	48%	100%	251	205
9	420	270	60%	100%	251	231
10	463	271	55%	102%	254	228
11	400	264	64%	102%	257	218
12	575	240	46%	106%	265	184
13	562	281	50%	111%	279	212

Source: Vastrap Boran

Male Weaning Data:

F cow with Angus/Boran calf (75/25)

#	DAM weight	Calf weight	RATIO	INDEX	ADJ WEIGHT	DAYS OLD
	01-May-19					
1	475	252	47%	81%	223	247
2	414	240	56%	85%	233	218
3	408	304	66%	97%	268	247
4	510	255	54%	100%	276	189
5	497	244	56%	101%	278	177
6	532	255	55%	105%	291	177
7	527	313	56%	108%	297	224
8	574	275	52%	108%	298	189
9	482	307	62%	108%	297	219
10	450	346	71%	116%	319	232

Source: Vastrap Boran