

# B R O K E N B O X R A N C H

By Erica Bianchi



Jerry & Sherry Maltby accepting the 2015 CA Seed Stock Producer of the year award.



**“Charolais cattle are optimum for cross breeding in order to develop superior beef.”**

*- Jerry Maltby*

rice straw operation, located in Williams Calif in Colusa County.

Broken Box Ranch has an unconventional story when it comes to their seed stock Charolais herd. The ranch began as a purebred Hereford ranch in the early 1950's. When trends in the cattle industry began to change in the late fifties and early sixties Jerry's dad was convinced that the Hereford breed was going in the wrong direction, with the breeding of mostly small framed cattle. During his time at California State University, Chico, specifically in 1962, Jerry was exposed to his very first set of Charolais cattle, immediately falling in love with the breed.

From the first encounter the ranch decided to purchase a Charolais bull to cross on their still purebred Herefords. The next calf crop was outstanding, shares the family. The calf crop was weaning with an increased weaning weight of over 150 pounds on average from the prior years. The next year they purchased their first group of Charolais cows. From then on the ranch began to raise purebred Charolais cattle. Currently they operate with close to 200 cows, with room to grow if the rains allow it.

Birth weight and weaning weight are the biggest traits that Maltby's search for when choosing a herd bull or retaining bulls to sell throughout the year. These traits are seen to be the most important to commercial bull buyers who purchase about 98% of Broken Box bulls yearly. Next to weaning weight soundness and flexibility is a must shares Jerry. White cattle always have a shear advantage over colored cattle in hot weather such as in Nevada, where many of their bull buyers are located. "I am always sure that black cattle absorb more heat because on a hot day the white cattle will be out in the pasture grazing while the black cattle will be hogging up whatever shade they can find." This only proved more that the ranch made the right choice when they chose to move to Charolais.

It is important for the ranch to | *CONTINUED ON PAGE 110*

**J**erry and wife Sherry own and operate a purebred Charolais cattle operation alongside a feedlot, commercial cow operation, and conventional and organic

Broken Box females.



Broken Box herd sire.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 108 | always raise a good product, Jerry shares, "I always raise bulls like the bull that I would go out and buy." They believe so much in their seed stock that the ranch retains some of their own bulls to use on their almost 100 head of commercial cattle. Using their own bulls allows them to further test their product and see how they stand up in the field.

Broken Box has always been proponents of Performance Testing – entering several different bull tests in the West throughout the years, as well as owning a bull-testing center. They have done the 50K testing on all herd sires which is fairly new to the Charolais breed. The ranch will have their whole herd tested when the association has their database set up and has obtained a significant amount of sample data. When speaking about EPD's Jerry stressed their importance, however, he knows that some commercial buyers aren't educated on such topics as the 50K testing, therefore he believes that it is important to maintain a traditional set of EPD's as well.

Selection of a herd bull is taken very seriously at Broken Box where they use certain protocols when selecting. First, and foremost, is ease

of calving. New herd bulls are bred to their own heifers. If there are any major calving difficulties, they don't stay. Second is their offspring's performance: weaning, yearling, and ultrasound data on rib eye, back fat, and marbling while maintaining a moderate frame size and proper structure. They currently have two major herd bulls in use at the ranch: Texas Riviera, who stacks generations of proven Full French genetics based on calving ease, structural soundness, dimension and maternal quality; and Winn Mans Lanza who has proven to be successful producing many top charting off spring at bull sales throughout the west.

Broken Box Charolais bulls can be found at the ranch throughout the year and leading sales throughout the west, including; Red Bluff Bull and Gelding Sale, Klamath Falls Bull Sale, and Fallon All Breeds Bull Sale.

Bulls are developed on a high-roughage ration, which is based around the rice straw side of their operation. With a high roughage diet and lots of exercise the bulls have an ease in movement and never have structural issues. They work to maintain bulls that are at adequate condi-

tion but are not too fat to go to work immediately after purchase. "If bulls are overly fat, they will find the first tree they come to and lay around all day instead of breeding cows." Shares Jerry, who doesn't buy into the new standard that bulls have to carry so much condition to look great at bull sales.

Record keeping is prevalent and an important part of the operation at Broken Box, Sherry heads up this department. She is very active in the everyday business as well as many local organizations. "We couldn't do it without her," Jerry shared with us.

When it comes to the seed stock side of the operation Broken Box plans to increase as much as possible in the next 10 years, if the rain allows an increase in herd size.

Not only do Maltbys own and operate a very successful seedstock and commercial cattle operation they also have a feedlot division. The modern 3,500-head feedlot is designed to handle cattle in summer and winter months. Covered working facilities allow the handling of all cattle with the least amount of stress. Cattle are fed twice daily and a pen rider observes the cattle daily. They also offer a heifer



Broken Box 2005 Houston Stock Show Champion.



Broken Box Feedlot.

Broken Box pair.



development program, including artificial insemination and/or natural breeding for clients. Within the feedlot Maltby's feed some of their own livestock as well as outside cattle. Cattle that enter the feedlot are cared for at the best of industry standards just like Maltby's would take care their own livestock.

Broken Box Ranch worked to produce a Certified Organic and Certified Weed- FREE rice straw. Rice production and rice straw is also a large part of operations at Broken Box Ranch. They have worked to do industry leading research in the area of rice straw. This research has been able to allow them to put up rice straw that is higher in protein. They have also taken part in many trials with the USDA extension agency to develop a product that can be applied to the straw which allows it to be put up much warmer and wetter than usual. This prevents fire and mold loss in the straw. Their rice straw is perfect for cattle feed, bedding, erosion control and construction. A new crop of rice straw is available every year in September.

It is prevalent that Broken Box Ranch and the Maltby family are industry leaders when you review that long list of honors that has been bestowed on both of them. In 2010 Broken Box Ranch was awarded Seed Stock Producer of the Year award by the California Cattle-men's association, an award that is very prestigious for all seed stock producers. Sherry has been named Cattlewomen of the year twice by their local Cattlewomen's Association, a group which she is very active in. Jerry has sat on their local Cattlemen's board for countless years, serving four terms as President. He is also very active in the Family Water Alliance, a group that works to save water for farming.

This year Jerry and Sherry Maltby were honored with the award of Seed Stock Producer of the Year at the spring meetings of the American International Charolais Association. This award is a great honor only awarded to the top Charolais breeders in the nation. Jerry has also served on the American International Charolais Association Board of Directors.

All of these operations combined make Broken Box Ranch a business to be reckoned with. They hope to continue to be an industry leader and deliver top quality cattle to their consumers. 

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