

Ona White Angus Herd  
University of Florida/IFAS  
Range Cattle Research and Education Center

*Complete Herd Liquidation*

**Frequently Asked Questions**



Question: What is an Ona White Angus?

Answer: The Ona White Angus is genetically  $\frac{3}{4}$  Black Angus but with a white hair coat color and dark skin. The remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  is a combination of Black Angus, Charolais, Brahman, and/or Simmental.

Question: Is the Ona White Angus a result of artificial genetic modification (GMO)?

Answer: No, these animals resulted from breeding projects with no artificially-induced genetic modification.

Question: How did the Ona White Angus originate?

Answer: Basically, by accident. We still do not fully understand the traits that resulted in this distinct phenotype, but attribute at least part of the outcome to the dilution effects of black hair coat dominance found in the Charolais and Simmental. The herd originated from a long-term beef cattle breeding project lead by F. M. Peacock, a professor of genetics at the University of Florida. That study focused on productivity traits of purebreds and crossbreds from three breeds – black Angus, Charolais, and Brahman. In the early 1990's his cowherd was transitioned to a new study aimed at evaluating reproductive efficiencies when bred to Simbrah bulls. Heifers from these matings were retained in the herd, therefore introducing genetics

from a fourth breed - Simmental. In 1999, this cowherd moved onto a third project and was mated to black Angus and black Brangus bulls. In 2002, we began to recognize a small, but significant number of white calves in the herd. We began isolating these heifer calves and breeding them to black Angus bulls. Over the following 12 years, we were able to identify and increase the number of individual cows that were responsible for passing this white color trait onto their offspring. From these cows, we formed the Foundation herd for the creation of the Ona White Angus.

Question: Do the Ona White Angus have advantages in warm climates?

Answer: Yes, our research implies that the white phenotype, combined with a predominantly black Angus genotype, provides significant advantages to beef cattle production in warm climates. In a 2008 publication of the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE. 51(6):2167), sweating rate differences among black Angus heifers and Ona White Angus heifers were reported. In that study, the Ona White Angus heifers exhibited an 83% greater sweating rate when compared to the black Angus heifers, which were derived from a black Angus herd that had been reared in Florida for several generations. These data were collected during the summer with solar loads exceeding 700 W/m<sup>2</sup> and the temperature x humidity index exceeding 82. In another study, we examined the vaginal temperatures of black Angus versus Ona White Angus over 5 consecutive summer days. All heifers were contained together in a pasture without access to shade. In this study, average peak vaginal temperatures were 1.1° C greater in the black Angus versus the Ona White Angus. These data suggest a greater ability for the Ona White Angus to cool themselves during instances of heat and humidity pressure. As a result, we have detected a significant decrease in the amount of daylight hours that the Ona White Angus expended in the shade.

Question: How many cows are in the herd?

Answer: Currently, the herd is estimated at 90 animals including pregnant cows, yearling heifers and bulls, and mature bulls.

Question: Why is the herd being sold?

Answer: Significant investment in reproductive technology to expand the herd's genetic base is needed. This requirement, combined with the growing age of our remaining foundation cows, makes this decision necessary. Private investment in the herd is now warranted so that these genetics can be made more broadly available to individuals around the World.

Question: How will the herd be sold?

Answer: Surplus beef cattle from the UF/IFAS, Range Cattle Research and Education Center are sold through public auction. The Ona White Angus herd will be sold through a licensed/bonded livestock auction broker in late 2015 or early 2016. This will be a public auction and available to interested buyers via internet. The entire herd will be sold in a single auction to a single

buyer(s). All Ona White Angus animals will be transferred to the buyer. No live animals, semen, or embryos will be retained.

Question: What is the Range Cattle Research and Education Center?

Answer: The Range Cattle Research and Education Center (RCREC) is a Unit of the University of Florida/IFAS. Established in 1941, the RCREC was created to conduct research on the productivity of beef cattle enterprises located in the unique subtropical region of southern Florida (27° 25' north longitude and 81° 55' west latitude at an elevation of 26 m). This region of the United States is home to large number of cattle ranches and holds the distinction of having the greatest number of beef cattle ranches with > 2,500 cows. The research programs of the RCREC are focused on subtropical beef production systems that maximize the efficiency of forage utilization for beef production.

Question: How can I learn more about the herd and the upcoming sale?

Answer: We are hosting a Field Day on Thursday, October 22 from 9 AM to 2 PM at the Turner Agri-Civic Center, 2250 NE Roan Road, Arcadia. Please visit our website <http://rcrec-ona.ifas.ufl.edu/> for more details, or contact Andrea Dunlap to be added to our mailing list.