

A Worldwide AMBASSADOR

By Lindsay L Allen

By definition, a pioneer is the first. Cox Excalibur Brangus “checks the box” for being the first... first to introduce Red Brangus cattle in Mexico, first generation Brangus breeder in his family and always eager to put the breed and youth first.

For those familiar with Brangus or Red Brangus, it was no surprise at this year’s Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo that Don Cox, owner of Cox Excalibur Brangus, was named Pioneer of the Year by the International Brangus Breeder’s Association (IBBA).

For almost four decades, Cox has been forging a path for Brangus and Red Brangus genetics around the world and has made a significant contribution to the breed, the people and the next generation, along with his wife, Lili, who is always by his side and attends all events with him, supporting his passion.

The legacy of their operation dates back 112 years ago when the ranch land was originally purchased west of Houston, Texas in Weimar by Cox’s grandparents, Frank and Tillie Krejci. Cox always had an interest in his grandparents’ way of life and knew he would follow in their footsteps. In 1983, he purchased the family land (and adjoining land

from a neighbor at a later time) that today is Cox Excalibur Brangus.

Cox wasn’t afraid to align the land to his goals and walk away from the farming aspect that some of the land had been used for in the past. His focus was on breeding the best genetics and thus began his involvement with the Red Brangus breed. One of his best decisions 28 years ago was to hire Jose Ramirez as his ranch manager and Cox credits a large part of their success to Ramirez’ involvement.

“I was, and still am, very interested in studying cattle and wanted to breed cattle that could survive and thrive in the hot, humid climates our southeast Texas ranch experienced,” he recalled, “It didn’t take long for my research to lead me to Brangus cattle and 39 years ago I established my Red Brangus herd.”

One of the first things a breeder has to do is establish a name for themselves, both literally and figuratively. Excalibur is a reflection of Cox’s goal to be on the cutting edge with his program. “King Arthur’s sword was named ‘Excalibur’ and since a sword is only of value if it is sharp, I thought it was a fitting parallel to the goals of our program.”

Cox Excalibur Brangus began introducing black Brangus



genetics in the early 90's. Cox has been actively marketing his cattle overseas since and beginning in 1988 has sold semen and embryos to nine different countries and has paved the way for Red Brangus in Mexico.

A 1997 meeting with Guillermo Zambrano, founder of Brangus Rojo de Mexico in Monterrey, Mexico led to a sale of Excalibur genetics. The cattle would be Zambrano's first Red Brangus and eventually Brangus Rojo de Mexico, an association in the country, was established, in large part because of Cox's involvement. In just a short time, the association now has 140 breeders with no signs of slowing down.

Because of his influence to help introduce the breed and establish an association in Mexico, Cox was awarded the Special Recognition Award for his service and international promotion of the breed from the Brangus Rojo de Mexico Association in 2018.

It's that same service and marketing that Cox is being recognized for this year, too. As Dr. Robert Vineyard said, "The Pioneer of the Year is awarded to an IBBA member who exemplifies service, loyalty and meaningful contributions to the Brangus breed. Don Cox possesses all these traits and more. He is a leader of people with good intentions, he has the will to succeed in every task or project he takes on and he accomplishes his goals with pride."

His efforts aren't just making an impact abroad either, but also stateside as Cox is actively involved with the association and donating his time and talent to better the breed.

His résumé includes the titles of 2010 IBBA president, chairman of many Brangus committees, treasurer/secretary for the association, and IBBA Board of Directors for eight years. He was also part of the original World Brangus Committee, which founded the World Brangus Congress (WBC) and he has attended the WBC in eight different countries to help grow the breed internationally.

Allen Goode, owner of TRIO Cattle and Genetics and IBBA Board member said, "Don Cox embodies the definition of a pioneer. An individual who imagines what can be and

then works with all of his might to make it happen. For the Red Brangus breed he is a statesman who has supported breeders and contributed to associations in their growth and development around the Brangus World. For the IBBA and the IRBBA, he had a vision of the strengths one unified breed association would have for everyone and led the charge to bring it to being. His vision for our association and our breed is to provide opportunity for all members and breeders through our Brangus and Red Brangus cattle."

"As we seek to expand the breed, the interactions and relationships we have with breeders around the world will be vital to our success," Cox said, "I've continually made myself available to serve on committees, and ultimately the Brangus breed. Helping the breed and the association in any way I can has always been important to me."

His service and desire to spread Brangus genetics doesn't stop there though. Cox Excalibur Red Brangus hosts an annual CX Advantage Sale every October and at this sale they support their local FFA youth and donate a heifer. "All the proceeds go to two local chapters," Cox shared, "We believe our FFA kids are the future and we want to give them every chance to attend meetings, conferences, and shows."

His contributions to the breed continue. With a strong Red Brangus herd and some black Brangus, Cox Excalibur is developing cattle that can grow and perform without supplemental feed. "Our pastures have zero feeders. We have selected our cattle so that they can grow on grass and do well in production. Our operation is laser focused on producing top herd sires and females and by breeding for cattle that reflect the highest quality genetics of the breed we are better able to promote Brangus," Cox said.

"It is truly an honor to receive this award. Growing the Brangus breed has always been a desire of mine because the cattle work in almost all climates, especially where the majority of the cattle in the world live. Brangus will continue to grow around the world and I'm excited to serve and be part of it all," Cox summarized.

