Texas Longhorn Cattle Weights and Measurements From Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, Oklahoma[1]

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The recent (1964) organization of the Texas Longhorn Breeders Association of America has focused attention on the physical characteristics of this breed of cattle. Dobie (1941) has immortalized the Texas Longhorn in legend, story and fact. The history and management of Longhorns on the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in southwestern Oklahoma has been recorded (Halloran and Shrader, 1960; Halloran, 1962). With the exception of a few weights and horn measurements, little has been published on the size of these bovines. This paper summarizes data taken on the Wichita Refuge, and is a preliminary step toward the establishment of physical standards for the breed. Tables I through IV are not complete nor are they subject to full statistical analysis. Practically all of the data were gathered on an adjunct to branding, vaccination, or other round-up activities. The authorization for this work by Refuge Manager Julian A. Howard, and the willing assistance of his staff in the arduous task of handling the animals is greatly appreciated.

Before proceeding with descriptions of terms found in the tables, it appears of value to point out that the name Texas Longhorn is used for this breed or type by Mason (1957) in his authoritative dictionary of the world's livestock. In the present paper, Texas Longhorn and Longhorn are used interchangeably. However, the name Longhorn has long been preempted in technical descriptions by a rare British breed. Color is important in selecting Longhorns for a show herd such as is found on the Wichita Refuge. No attempt is made in this presentation to analyze this factor. Suffice it to say that Texas Longhorns occur in many shades, and that on both sides of the Mexican border individual animals are known to the men on the range by their colors. These names include *sabina* (speckled), *gateada* (brindle), *bayo* (dun), *grulla* (mouse or sandhill crane colored), and *prieto* (black).

TABLE I. TEXAS LONGHORN CALF WEIGHTS AND HORN SPANS

Class	Average Weight	Weight Range	Average Horn Span	Horn Span Range
Bulls	443 (11)	360-565	11.69 (17)	8.75-14.25
Steers	415 (32)	300-505	11.67 (33)	9.25-14.37
Heifers	389 (23)	330-465	8.92 (35)	6.12-12.87

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TABLE II. TEXAS LONGHORN BULL WEIGHTS AND MEASUREMENTS

Age	Weights		Horn Spans		Trunk		Shoulder		Sacrum		Hump	
	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range
1½	740(2)	725-755	30.83(4)	29.00-34.00	62(2)	59-63	48(2)	—	49.5(2)	49-50	—	—
2½	922(2)	850-995	35.50(2)	34.00-36.00	70(1)	—	—	—	50(1)	—	48(1)	—
3½	1205(3)	1075-1300	36.00(3)	34.00-40.00	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4½	1295(1)	—	39.00(2)	38.00-40.00	76(1)	—	57(1)	—	54(1)	—	—	—
7½	1557(2)	1515-1600	42.00(1)	—	90(1)	—	—	—	55(1)	—	52(1)	—
8½	1500(1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
9½	1413(3)	1295-1475	35.50(2)	28.50-42.50	77(2)	77-78	57(1)	—	55(2)	52-58	54(1)	—
10½	1380(1)	—	36.25(1)	—	84(1)	—	—	—	57(1)	—	56(1)	—
11½	—	—	29.00(1)	—	70(1)	—	53(1)	—	54(1)	—	—	—

TABLE III. TEXAS LONGHORN COW WEIGHTS AND MEASUREMENTS

	Weights		Horn Spans		Trunk		Shoulder		Sacrum	
Age	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range
1½	590(7)	420-655	20.21(17)	13.50-24.50	52(4)	47-58	46(4)	45-48	48(4)	45-51
2½	807(2)	760-845	24.11(11)	18.25-29.50	69(2)	66-71	48(2)	48-48	51(2)	51-51
3½	894(4)	830-915	27.37(4)	24.00-31.50	65(1)	—	51(1)	—	53(1)	—
4½	830(3)	765-870	31.00(2)	27.00-39.00	—	—	—	—	—	—
5½	905(2)	830-1045	30.67(3)	28.50-33.50	61(2)	58-64	49(1)	49-50	51(2)	50-52
6½	933(6)	845-1070	35.56(8)	27.00-43.00	71(2)	70-73	50(2)	48-53	52(2)	49-56
7½	979(5)	870-1040	38.67(3)	33.00-47.00	68(1)	—	51(1)	—	53(1)	—
8½	983(4)	800-965	34.00(5)	29.50-39.50	—	—	—	—	—	—
9½	981(4)	900-1055	37.64(7)	28.50-44.00	63(1)	—	50(1)	—	53(1)	—
10½	980(4)	840-1080	38.37(6)	25.00-49.00	—	—	55(1)	—	56(1)	—
11½	860(2)	765-955	39.00(2)	38.00-40.00	—	—	—	—	—	—
12½	914(1)	—	43.00(3)	39.50-49.00	65(3)	63-67	52(3)	51-53	55(3)	53-58
13½	939(4)	850-1000	40.06(6)	35.00-43.00	—	—	—	—	—	—
14½	975(1)	—	39.75(2)	39.50-40.00	—	—	—	—	—	—
15½	1040(5)	975-1180	36.46(6)	34.00-45.00	—	—	—	—	—	—
16½	896(4)	815-1005	38.10(5)	27.50-44.50	73(1)	—	51(1)	—	53(1)	—
17½	927(3)	910-940	38.00(3)	36.00-42.00	—	—	—	—	—	—

TABLE IV. TEXAS LONGHORN STEER WEIGHTS AND MEASUREMENTS

Age	Weights		Horn Spans		Trunk		Shoulder		Sacrum	
	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range
1½	640(3)	584-715	26.89(7)	22.00-30.00	53(6)	47-62	47(7)	45-48	50(7)	47-51
2½	750(1)	—	33.87(2)	31.75-36.00	63(1)	—	54(1)	—	55(1)	—
3½	1070(1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4½	1230(6)	1085-1400	44.25(2)	37.50-51.00	80(1)	—	58(1)	—	60(1)	—
5½	1385(4)	1245-1595	48.00(1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6½	1359(6)	1335-1630	54.25(1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
7½	1511(9)	1280-1825	49.00(2)	45.00-53.00	80(1)	—	60(1)	—	63(1)	—
8½	1666(7)	1445-2050	52.00(6)	37.00-57.00	80(6)	76-83	59(6)	57-63	62(6)	59-65
9½	1709(6)	1570-1950	57.17(6)	49.00-66.00	79(4)	75-87	60(5)	58-61	52(5)	62-64
10½	1830(13)	1450-2045	60.37(4)	53.00-74.00	77(3)	70-81	60(3)	59-60	63(3)	62-64
11½	1715(2)	1555-1875	58.75(4)	50.00-65.00	76(4)	72-82	60(3)	56-63	62(4)	60-64
12½	1612(10)	1490-1825	58.72(9)	51.00-64.00	77(8)	71-84	60(8)	57-64	62(8)	58-65
13½	1582(4)	1425-1685	55.75(5)	50.00-59.00	82(2)	79-85	61(2)	60-63	63(2)	63-63
14½	1593(3)	1530-1710	58.00(2)	52.00-64.00	82(1)	—	61(1)	—	62(1)	—
15½	1380(3)	1220-1540	69.12(2)	65.25-73.00	—	—	64(1)	—	65(1)	—
16½	1531(4)	1410-1620	65.00(2)	62.00-68.00	74(1)	—	62(1)	—	63(1)	—
17½	1448(2)	1435-1450	57.00(1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
18½	1500(1)	—	57.25(1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

All weights are in pounds and measurements in inches. The calf weights and other measurements of Table I were taken in the fall when the animals were approximately six months old. Tabulated numbers in parentheses refer to the number of animals weighed or measured.

In Tables II to IV inclusive the age is listed in years. As most of the animals are born in the spring and weighed in the fall, the figures 1½, 2½, etc. are used. Horn span is the chord or "pole measure" from tip to tip. Measurements along the curve of the horns are, of course always greater. The "trunk" measurement is an attempt to judge the comparative body length in the various classes. This figure is the distance from the midpoint of the posterior side of the bony base between the horns and the base of the tail. It is a practical measure that can be taken while an animal is confined in a squeeze chute. The shoulder height is of the standing animal from the withers to the ground. Likewise, the sacrum height is from the top of the bone at the base of the tail (tail-head) to the ground. Longhorn bulls have a muscular cervico-thoracic hump forward of the withers that is known in range language as a "bull-neck", and is lacking in steers and cows. This is the "hump" measurement of Table II and is the distance, measured on the standing animal, from the top of the hump to the ground.

A very few cattle have been measured after death. Standard mammal measurements in inches for a cow ten years old were: TL102, LT29, HF21, 6 (ear from notch), and for a nine-year-old steer were: 103, 37, 18, 6-7/8. The head breadth of this animal (from hairline at base of one horn to hairline on other horn) was 13 inches. Another characteristic of these cattle is a long face. The steer under discussion had a face length from nose tip to head crown of 23½ inches.

The tabulated summaries are based upon records of individually branded animals. These basic figures found in the office of the refuge manager may be used to calculate individual growth.

Much interest is evinced in the weight and horn size of the larger steers. The heaviest Wichita steer of record weighed 2050 lb at 8½ years of age. The greatest tip-to-tip horn span of a Wichita steer (ten years old) is 6 ft 2 inches. A nine-year-old animal with a 66-inch tip-to-tip spread measured 7 ft 6½ inches along his horns.

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