Hybrid Vigor, also known as heterosis, is a marked increase in performance and output that can be achieved through crossbreeding. It is equivalent to \(2 + 2 = 5\). Although hybrid vigor is not totally free, it’s as close to free as we’re ever going to get. Hybrid vigor has a significant effect on growth and performance, but its greatest effect is on fertility, doability, and longevity. Therefore, a crossbred cow has huge economic advantages over a purebred cow.

Here is an analogy that might make this concept a little easier to understand. Straight breeding (Angus x Angus) is like depositing money in a checking account. What you put in is exactly what you can take back out. On the other hand, crossbreeding is like depositing money in a savings account. Not only can you take out what you put in, you will also take out some accrued interest (hybrid vigor).

Breed Complementarity is another positive factor that can only be achieved through some form of crossbreeding. This involves taking the positive traits that exist in two different purebreds and putting them together in a crossbred animal. In other words, the traits of one breed will complement the traits of another breed when they are combined.

A crossbred range cow should be 50% to 100% English (Angus, Hereford, Red Angus) breeding. She should never be over 50% Continental (Tarentaise, Gelbvieh, Simmental) breeding. Since some continental breeds are not maternal in nature they should seldom, if ever, be used to produce replacement heifers.

Crossbred calves that seem to perform the best in the feedlot and on the rail will be 50% to 75% English breeding and 25% to 50% Continental breeding. Although 100% English bred calves cannot compete with continental-cross calves for cutability, they excel in the white tablecloth market, as well as the grass-fed beef market.

Commercial ranchers need to be working with a crossbred cow herd, because they cannot afford to give up the advantages of hybrid vigor and breed complementarity. However, managing an effective crossbreeding system requires some forethought and discipline. You can’t just buy the cheapest bulls that meet your basic color requirements. Take time to make a plan and then stick with it.

Pharo Cattle Company can provide all the genetic ingredients for a successful crossbreeding system. This sale has a great selection of Angus, Red Angus, and Composite bulls to choose from. We are a no-nonsense seedstock producer who has always selected for efficient, moderate-sized, maternal cattle. Our cows run on short native grass year-round with minimum supplementation.

Keeping it simple. If you would like the advantages of hybrid vigor and breed complementarity without all the problems and headaches involved in managing a crossbreeding system, you might consider using our Composite bulls. Traditional crossbreeding requires all cows to be identified and sorted into different breeding pastures to be bred by bulls of different breeds. For many this requires too much time and management. Most crossbreeding systems will also produce a lack of uniformity because calves are sired by two or more different breeds of bulls.

Composite bulls enable you to run your entire cow herd together with one set of bulls, if so desired. Record keeping and sorting can be minimized. This also makes it possible for you to implement a rotational grazing system.

Our Composite bulls can simplify your breeding system, as well as move your program in the right direction. They’re 50% to 75% English breeding and 25% to 50% Continental breeding, and they can be either red or black in color.