



Braford
LA RAZA QUE
MÁS CRECE

Handbook
**RESPONDING TO
GLOBAL DEMAND**



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Introduction

Braford cattle production in Argentina currently spans 16 provinces, representing 21% of the national cattle stock.

This activity produces meat for both domestic consumption and export.

Among the main export destinations are Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Portugal, the United States, Colombia, Chile, Brazil, China, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Production includes animals raised and fattened under both Grass-fed and Grain-fed systems, tailored to meet the specific demands of each destination.

For exports, the primary channels for premium Braford beef cuts are the HORECA sector (Hotels, Restaurants, and Catering) and retail, both targeting consumers who value high-quality products and traceability.

The Argentine Braford Association plays a crucial role in promoting the breed's capabilities and distinctive attributes for producing quality meat. Its mission includes providing strategic tools to members and producers, fostering continuous development and improvement of the breed. This is framed within a comprehensive quality approach to meet the expectations of a demanding, committed, and selective consumer base.

To optimize production and economic benefits, it is essential for cattle producers to develop and market livestock that meets market preferences, potentially commanding premium prices. Success in the final fattening and finishing stages depends largely on accurately identifying the target market and establishing solid commercial relationships. However, the key challenge lies in recognizing that quality starts in the initial stages of production and is strengthened throughout the entire production process.

Once the specific quality attributes demanded by the market are identified, it becomes a priority to adjust production systems to meet these demands efficiently, ensuring a balance between quality and profitability.





Key factors contributing to success include:

- Reducing price penalties due to management issues in the field (e.g., bruised animals or abscesses caused by vaccines).
- Meeting weight, fat, and conformation standards.

Overly fat animals result in significant losses for producers, amounting to thousands of dollars in missed revenue. Both processing industries and supermarkets prefer products with balanced fat levels.

Producing excessively fat animals is also inefficient, requiring more energy to produce one kilogram of fat compared to one kilogram of muscle, increasing costs without proportional price benefits.

Avoiding deficiencies during the rearing and fattening stages.

Animals that fail to meet market specifications may compromise meat quality in terms of tenderness, flavor, and expected portion sizes, leading to lower prices and competitiveness in markets valuing cuts with defined marbling and conformation.

Expected meat quality encompasses key variables such as intramuscular fat (marbling) and the uniformity and consistency of premium cuts.

A bruised carcass



steak with a vaccine-related abscess.





A steak with insufficient marbling



muscle-to-fat ratio.

Essential organoleptic characteristics like juiciness, tenderness, and flavor remain critical, but the market also values production methods and commitments to responsible resource and personnel management.

The Braford breed, with its unique attributes, combined with responsible practices and a focus on high-value markets, serves as a strategic tool for producers aiming to maximize business opportunities across different regions of Argentina and meet global consumer demands. This handbook serves as an introductory resource for understanding and leveraging the full potential of the Braford breed in the cattle and meat business.

Attributes of the Braford Breed

The genetic attributes of the Braford breed not only ensure its performance in less favorable climatic regions for cattle ranching but also make it an integral tool for addressing the challenges posed by climate change.

Its adaptability, resilience, and efficiency position it as one of the suitable breeds for sustainable cattle production in the future. Furthermore, its adaptation to hostile climates and its flexibility are key aspects to rapidly adjust to different production and management systems across diverse regions and environments with variable climatic patterns.

The breed excels in:

- Reproductive efficiency, measured through tangible indicators like weaning weight and milk production of dams.
- Efficient rearing on pastures with variable quality.
- High feed conversion rates, producing young slaughter animals (24 months old) weighing 480-500 kilograms with excellent muscle-to-fat ratios
- The integration of body structure (frame) with early finishing capabilities enables the Braford breed to meet market demands for large, well-formed cuts that are tender and exhibit adequate fat infiltration. These attributes position the Braford breed as a strategic choice for meat production across vast regions of the country.

A steak with excellent conformation and marbling.





Consumer Vision as the Driving Force of the Meat Chain

The end consumer's choice revolves around product and process quality, assessed through various factors, including biochemical, organoleptic, safety, and social considerations.

Quality, whether as a tangible parameter or a matter of consumer perception, drives the meat chain and directs the cattle production system towards producing the right type of animal in the right way to meet demand.

Market studies show that consumers value tender, juicy, and flavorful meat with well-distributed intramuscular fat rather than external fat accumulation.





Factors like price and value-for-money also play a crucial role.

Above all, consumers seek consistency in the product, expecting a satisfying experience with every purchase, preparation, and consumption.

For the industry as a buyer of livestock, specifications for weight, muscular conformation, and fat distribution are key.

Prices can vary for the same animals based on the requirements of their clients in the supply chain. Slaughterhouses prioritize animals that:

- **Arrive at the right time and in the required conditions.**
- **Meet precise specifications for weight, fat, and conformation.**

Field selection is thus crucial, encompassing the evaluation of conformation—a key aspect for maximizing economic returns. Well-conformed animals yield more usable meat and higher-value cuts.

The Importance of Measuring Different Attributes to Establish Meat Quality

As part of its "Braford Meats" Program, the Argentine Braford Association conducts carcass evaluations to help more producers understand quality through established international standards. These measurements include: Meat and fat colour, Marbling level, Ribeye area, Carcass maturity.

Marbling (intramuscular fat) is a decisive indicator of quality for certain meat cuts. It is unevenly distributed throughout the carcass, enhancing flavor and juiciness. It also serves as a criterion in meat commercialization agreements.

Sensory aspects like texture, color, aroma, juiciness, and flavor are empirically analyzed by consumers and professionals such as meat sommeliers.

Feedback from carcass evaluations links these findings to genetic, management, and nutritional data, enabling the identification of best-performing variables. This approach aims to develop intelligence focused on meat production through a virtuous management process.

Traceability and animal welfare standards.



The New Perspective of the Global Market

Sustainability, animal welfare, social responsibility, fair trade, and ethical practices are key principles shaping a responsible framework aligned with contemporary and future global challenges.

These principles are particularly relevant in the cattle and meat sectors, where balancing productive efficiency, social welfare, and environmental conservation is essential.

This strategic imperative ensures compliance with regulatory demands, meets international market expectations, and contributes to sustainable development.

The effects of global warming and extreme weather events are increasingly evident, leading society to demand greater guarantees from agricultural and livestock producers, such as validating carbon-neutral production, minimizing land use impact, and promoting habitat and biodiversity conservation.

Livestock production must meet the challenge of producing meat in environmentally sensitive contexts while maintaining high product quality. In this context, the Braford breed's adaptability, resilience, and productive efficiency make it well-suited to tackle these challenges globally.

Additional consumer expectations focus on sustainability:

- Traceability and transparency: Ensuring origin integrity and adherence to good practices throughout the supply chain, fostering long-term, robust commercial relationships.
- Animal welfare: Careful handling reduces visible injuries, such as bruises, which lower carcass value. Chronic or acute stress in animals directly affects meat quality, degrading its value. The docility of Braford cattle, one of its most valued traits, supports responsible handling practices aligned with ethical and sustainable standards demanded by today's markets





- Social commitment: Addressing social agendas, fostering local development, and considering future generations strengthen consumer trust and add value to Argentine Braford beef.