

## **HISTORY OF MURRAY GREY CATTLE**

Murray Grey's, the grey cattle from Australia, are a natural genetic phenomenon that was recognized and preserved by chance. In 1905, on the Thologolong property of Peter Sutherland, in Southern New South Wales, a particular Shorthorn cow was bred to various Aberdeen Angus bulls. This cow dropped only grey calves, 12 of them by 1917. Because Eva Sutherland liked these grey calves, her husband didn't slaughter them, even though he feared they would reflect poorly on his black Angus herd.

When Eva's husband died in 1929, she sold the herd of Greys to her cousin, Helen Sutherland, who started systematically breeding the Greys with 8 cows and 4 bulls. In the early 1940's Mervyn Gadd started a second Murray Grey herd as a commercial venture, using a grey bull from Sutherlands and breeding up from Angus cows. Gadd was convinced that the Greys were better and more efficient weight gainers, but it wasn't until 1957 that the demand for them developed. Butchers paid a premium price for the Greys because of their consistent high cutability and less waste. Breeder after breeder turned to them and in 1962 fifty breeders banded together to form the Murray Grey Beef Society of Australia. They named the cattle for their color and for the fact they were developed along the Murray River.

Murray Grey's were first introduced, via imported semen, to the US in 1969. A group of imaginative cattlemen, recognizing the profitable characteristics of the Grey's, and then formed and chartered the American Murray Grey Association in 1971. Since then membership has expanded into almost every state. Grey's and their crosses can be found producing in the harsh Western range country, in the Corn Belt pastures, in the short grass country of the Plains and the hot climates of the South. Through importation and breed-up programs, purebreds have become numerous, making seed stock selection more available.

Presently, Murray Grey's are considered by many to be the most efficient breed in the world. They will produce more quality beef per acre of land and require the least expensive feed, labor and fencing. The Grey's have a quiet temperament and are easy to handle, making them desirable in feed lots all around the country.