A Brief History

Murray Grey Cattle

According to the long-standing Australian story, the first Murray Grey was born on the Thologolong property of Peter Sutherland in New South Wales in 1905, to a light roan Shorthorn cow and an Aberdeen Angus bull. The legend goes on to recount how this one cow gave birth to 12 off color calves, from which Mrs. Helen Sutherland, cousin to Peter, developed the breed. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the breed actually originated throughout Australia as ranchers used “blue roan” bulls on their “blue roan” females. To this point, when the Murray Grey Beef Cattle Society Australia was formed in 1964, there were Murray Greys in Tasmania with no pedigree connection to Thologolong or Michaelong breeding.

On the website of The Murray Grey Australia Breeders Association there is the following article:

The True History of the Murray Grey Breed

The first Grey calf was bred by accident from an Angus sire over a light roan Shorthorn cow at Thologolong on the Murray River. This cow along with a couple of other roan shorthorn cows went on to produce many grey calves to different Angus sires. Ena Sutherland, wife of Peter Sutherland who owned Thologolong raised these Mulberries’ (as they were known) until she sold the small herd to her daughter Helen. Under Helen’s care at Michaelong, the herd grew with fantastic results and noted cattlemen in the district began to like these wonderful cattle because of their incredible qualities. In the 1930s Murray Grey bulls were sired for the first time. The first sire was Thologolong Australia who went on to sire many champions.

Murray Greys were introduced to the United States by semen in 1969. The first 50% MG calves were born in 1970 and the first live imports arrived in 1972.

The American Murray Grey Association

Founded by 9 cattlemen and ranchers, AMGA was organized in September of 1971 as a 501 not – for – profit organization. The Association is managed by a 6-member Board of Directors elected by the membership. Following the start – up the Association located in Billings, MT where Mr. Norm Warsinky served as the first Executive Secretary. Following his retirement, Mrs. Joan Turnquist provided Executive Secretary services for many years.

In the mid – 1990’s, Mrs. Turnquist resigned and long – time purebred beef ranch manager Richard Burgin served a brief term as Executive Secretary. Mr. Burgin was dealing with personal health issues and he used his short time with AMGA to help the Board of Directors find a new executive. He connected the AMGA with Mr. James Spawn and Attaché, International of Kansas City, MO.

In October 1998, the American Murray Grey Association hosted the Murray Grey World Congress at the Northern International Livestock Expo in Billings, MT. The membership voted at the Annual Meeting there, to join with the other 4 national Murray Grey associations to combine performance data, thereby giving American and Canadian breeders access to Expected Progeny Differences (EPDs).
The decision to join the other Murray Grey societies led to AMGA and Attaché Int parting company. John Gerow assumed the Executive Director’s position on July 1, 1999. AMGA contracted with the Canadian Angus Association for registrar services. Unfortunately, for AMGA, the American Hereford Association had also contracted to use the same computer system as the world’s Murray Greys were using and Hereford got there first! It took more than a year for all the Hereford records to be transferred into the new computer system. During that time, AMGA functioned with no access to their computer records.

In 2002 AMGA assumed the registry responsibilities from the Canadian Angus Association in a pilot project with the University of New England in Australia. Using VPN technology and emulation software, AMGA was able to connect directly to the computer in Australia and enter data and produce certificates and reports. This has become the model for other breed associations, giving even the smallest registries access to the most sophisticated breed registry software available through, even modest, PCs.

The American Murray Grey Association is a full service breed registry providing pedigree registration, genetic performance evaluation (EPDs), breed and breeder promotion and sales management services.