

HORN



Growth Trends & Projections

By: Molly Clubb



Photo Courtesy www.TaylorRandtLonghorns.com



Photo Courtesy www.BigValleyLonghorns.com



Photo Courtesy www.HelmCattleCompany.com

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Photo Courtesy www.TLBAA.org

INTRODUCTION

For many, the arrival of Fall means back to school activities, football, enjoying cooler temperatures and, of course, hunting. For the serious Longhorn breeder, the arrival of Fall also means measurement competitions.

Each September and October Longhorn breeders from coast to coast load up the cattle they think can compete against the tape, beating out other cattle of similar age, and haul them to either a satellite measurement location near their ranch or to the Horn Showcase (Fort Worth, Texas) or Longhorn World Championship (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma). These outstanding animals can be measured for Tip-to-Tip (TTT), Total Horn (TH) or Composite (an average TTT, TH and Base) - all recorded to the nearest 1/16th of an inch.



Photo Courtesy www.TaylorRanchLonghorns.com

I have been attending these horn measurement competitions for as long as I can remember. I never fail to be amazed at the quality of the animals competing and how these amazing creatures seem to, as planned by those who bred them of course, push the boundaries for horn development year after year. It's one thing to see an exceptionally well-bred and fast growing animal in the pasture, and quite another to see hundreds of them under the same roof. For many, I'm sure, the wow factor of these exquisite creatures measurements at their age, don't sink in until they are in the ring and being announced. It's there that you may realize a 1-year-old old bull just measured 42" TTT, beating out his own class by 7" and the following class by five inches.¹ Or, a six-year-old cow just broke the world record measuring 90-5/8" TTT - over 7-1/2 feet wide - her horns near the length of her body!²

That is just one of the reasons that spurred me to do the research included in and write this article. The second reason was that, even when not competing, the bar for milestone horn growth is being raised year after year. Through 2013, many of the breeders I spoke with who are looking to invest in heifers to raise the bar for their programs or young bulls who may be the next "Ultimate Bull" have goal measurements in mind. The trend seems to be that they're looking for heifers who are 55"+ TTT by 24 months. If a bull doesn't have the total package but also measure close to 65"+ TTT by 24 months he may not make the cut. With this bar being constantly raised, I wanted to look at how far we've come in the past 5 years and also try to predict where we'll be, in terms of competitive horn growth at various ages, in the future. I'm sure some of you have already done these types of calculations on your own or with your own herds measurements at various ages and I'd welcome your feedback and also your data - perhaps we can do a follow up segment to this research and article following the 2013 competitions.



Photo Courtesy www.RockinHLonghorns.com

W | have been breeding Texas Longhorns for almost 20 years and over that time the emphasis on horn has steadily increased. There has always been and probably always will be a debate over whether breeding for the horn emphasis is too great; whether this single trait selection has, or will, hurt the Longhorn breed overall. I've often heard the question asked 'When will enough horn be enough horn?' In my opinion, in this novelty breed, we are not raising beef consumption animals and their primary value comes from horn length," says Roger Hutton, Cloud 9 Longhorns, a partner-owner of the once officially measured longest horned bull in the world, Top Caliber. "The importance of horn length in breeding became obvious to me pretty early on," he goes on to say. "So, in 2008 I bought an interest in Top Caliber, the bull whom for over four years held the longest horned Tip-to-Tip official record, and still is the official longest complete horned bull in the breed. It is interesting to note that the longest horned cow in the breed, BL Rio Catchit, now over ninety inches Tip-to-Tip, goes back to Top Caliber's Grandmother on the cow family side of her pedigree," says Roger.

"While I obviously breed for as much horn as possible, I do not believe that you have to sacrifice the other important qualities of the historic Texas Longhorn breed such as calving ease, forage efficiency, milking ability and fertility. My breeding program has always sought to keep these important qualities, while putting as much horn in the pedigree as possible. I also believe that the recognition of the importance of this need for balance in the pedigree is growing among Texas Longhorn breeders. This is a good thing for all breeders and the breed in the long run," Roger finishes.

You can learn more about Cloud 9 Longhorns by visiting www.Cloud9Longhorns.com

My third, and final, reason for writing such an article is to try to help you as breeders. There have been too many instances for my liking where I meet a new breeder who is filled with passion and excitement for these beautiful cattle and this great Industry, and they end up being oversold and under delivered on what they thought was or was destined to be a record-breaking animal. Although there is more to Longhorns than

their TTT measurement, that scenario, is not good for them or for the future of our Industry. Perhaps having taken the time to gather and analyze the data with help educate new breeders more quickly on the trends of today's horn growth for Texas Longhorns.

W | hen we started out buying Longhorns my interest was bloodlines, body size, color, disposition and horn," says Brian Brett, Brett Ranch. Brian has been breeding Longhorns for five years. "None of the first four components have changed but, due to education of the trends of the breed, my interest and knowledge of horn growth has evolved. I now look for lateral growth, horns sweeping back, tips that show they the chance to rollover, and more. I have also developed what I feel to be a solid plan for breeding for the traits I feel are important with an emphasis on horn. At the present time I am in year three of my plan and am loving the results that I'm seeing from combining Jamakizm, Drag Iron, Top Caliber and other popular horn genetics," says Brian with a smile.

You can learn more about Brett Ranch by visiting www.BrettRanch.com



Photo Courtesy www.LegendValleyRanch.com

W | n today's Longhorn market, an animal with great color and body minus horn has a low dollar value", says John Helm, Helm Cattle Company. Horn is central to everything. If we have the horn, we are breeding to add the color and body; If we have the color and body and we are breeding to add the horn; most breeders want it all, but in today's market horn is definitely the main thing."

You can learn more about Helm Cattle Company by visiting www.HelmCattleCompany.com

“For me personally,” says Kathy Kittler, Kittler Land & Cattle, “about the only things I don’t care for in terms of horns are thin horns or unnaturally thick bases. Although, I do like to see good thickness the entire length of the horn. I would not want to sacrifice body, as in correct conformation, size and beef qualities, in exchange for horn tip to tip measurements. There seems to be a growing appreciation for horn shape and total horn, which is refreshing to see. It has to be a balance of all these things.”

You can learn more about Kittler Longhorns by visiting www.KittlerLandAndCattle.com

THE DATA

Let’s now look at the data, why I used the data I did, and how it was manipulated. I began by taking the official measurement data for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd placed animals from 2010, 2011 & 2012 as printed in the Texas Longhorn Journal for the Longhorn World Championship and Trails Magazine for the Horn Showcase. I associated all of these winning measurements with the birthdates of the winning

animal as printed in the official programs for both organizations. I was able to look at the data on its own but also average it by classes, divisions and across the board for the two events combined. The graphs and tables contained in this article are the result of manipulating such data. The overview of the data for females can be found in the table below and on page 5 for the males.

FEMALES

	2010 LWC	2010 HSC	2010 AVG	2011 LWC	2011 HSC	2011 AVG	2012 LWC	2012 HSC	2012 AVG	Total Avg.
12-18 mo.	40.59	40.59	40.59	42.98	38.865	40.9225	45.12	42.106	43.613	41.709
19-24 mo.	51.72	48.52	50.12	50.9225	50.2925	50.6075	54.28	51.8	53.04	51.256
25-30 mo.	59.5	59.5	59.5	59.395	54.92	57.1575	62.67	60.033	61.3515	59.336
31-36 mo.	58.235	57.63	57.9325	64.855	63.37	64.1125	66.465	64.74	65.6025	62.549
37-42 mo.	59.415	66.145	62.78	68.54	68.05	68.295	74.44	70.54	72.49	67.855
43-48 mo.	71.77	74.38	73.075	71.42	68.9	70.16	76.21	69.79	73	72.078
4-5 yr.	76.665	67.58	72.1225	76.58	71.223	73.9015	75.71	77.82	76.765	74.263
5+ yr.	81.24	79.08	80.16	80.53	76.94	78.735	80.18	78.78	79.48	79.458

	2013 Projected TTT Avg.	2014 Projected TTT Avg.	2015 Projected TTT Avg.	2016 Projected TTT Avg.	2017 Projected TTT Avg.
12-18 mo.	44.621	45.628	46.636	47.643	48.651
19-24 mo.	54.013	54.987	55.960	56.933	57.907
25-30 mo.	61.969	62.586	63.203	63.820	64.437
31-36 mo.	68.159	70.716	73.273	75.829	78.386
37-42 mo.	75.723	78.957	82.190	85.423	88.657
43-48 mo.					
4-5 yr.	78.313	79.860	81.408	82.955	84.503
5+ yr.					

Photo Courtesy www.BigValleyLonghorns.com



*The average data for the categories left blank are insufficient. These categories did not show any positive growth over a three year span (on average). Therefore they could not be projected. Any projection would be pure speculation.
 ** This category shows a huge overall projection due to the fact that in the official averaged data over a three year span the average TTT increased more than ten inches, making the inch per year increase an average of 3.23”.

CHART ONE

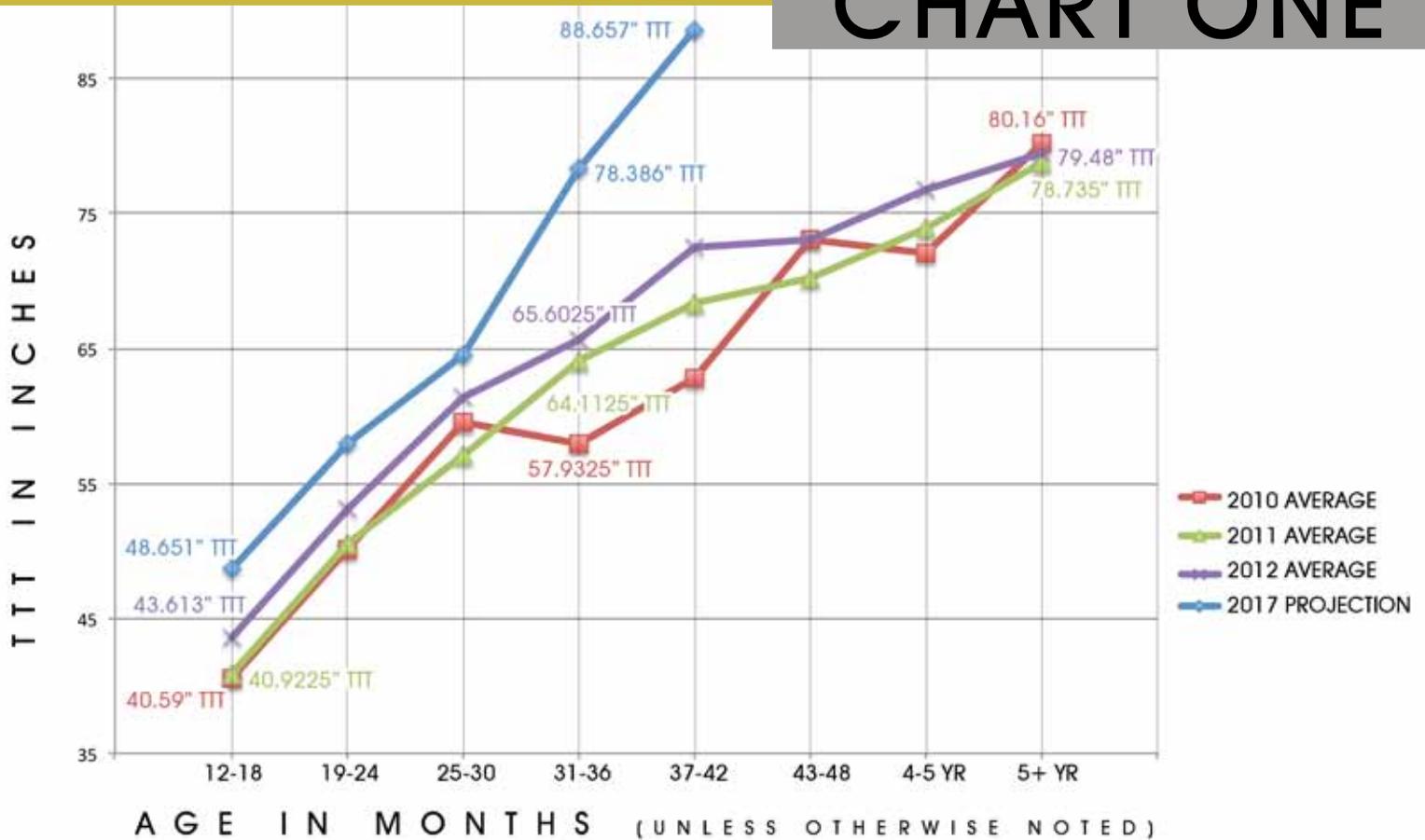


CHART ONE:

This chart shows the averaged official Tip-to-Tip (TTT) horn measurement from the Horn Showcase and Longhorn World Championship for females from 2010 - 2012 with projections of measurements by the year 2017.

Based off this data and the trends in growth from 2010 through 2012 it can be assumed that in 5 years, by 2017, the TTT measurements on page 3 would be feasible. That would mean that the following age groups would measure this far ahead of where they are today:

- 12-18 months: 5.38" TTT increase
- 19-24 months: 4.867" TTT increase
- 25-30 months: 3.086" TTT increase
- 31-36 months: 5.896" TTT increase
- 37-42 months: 16.167" TTT increase**
- 43-48 months: Insufficient data to project*
- 4-5 years: 7.738" TTT increase
- 5+ years: Insufficient data to project*

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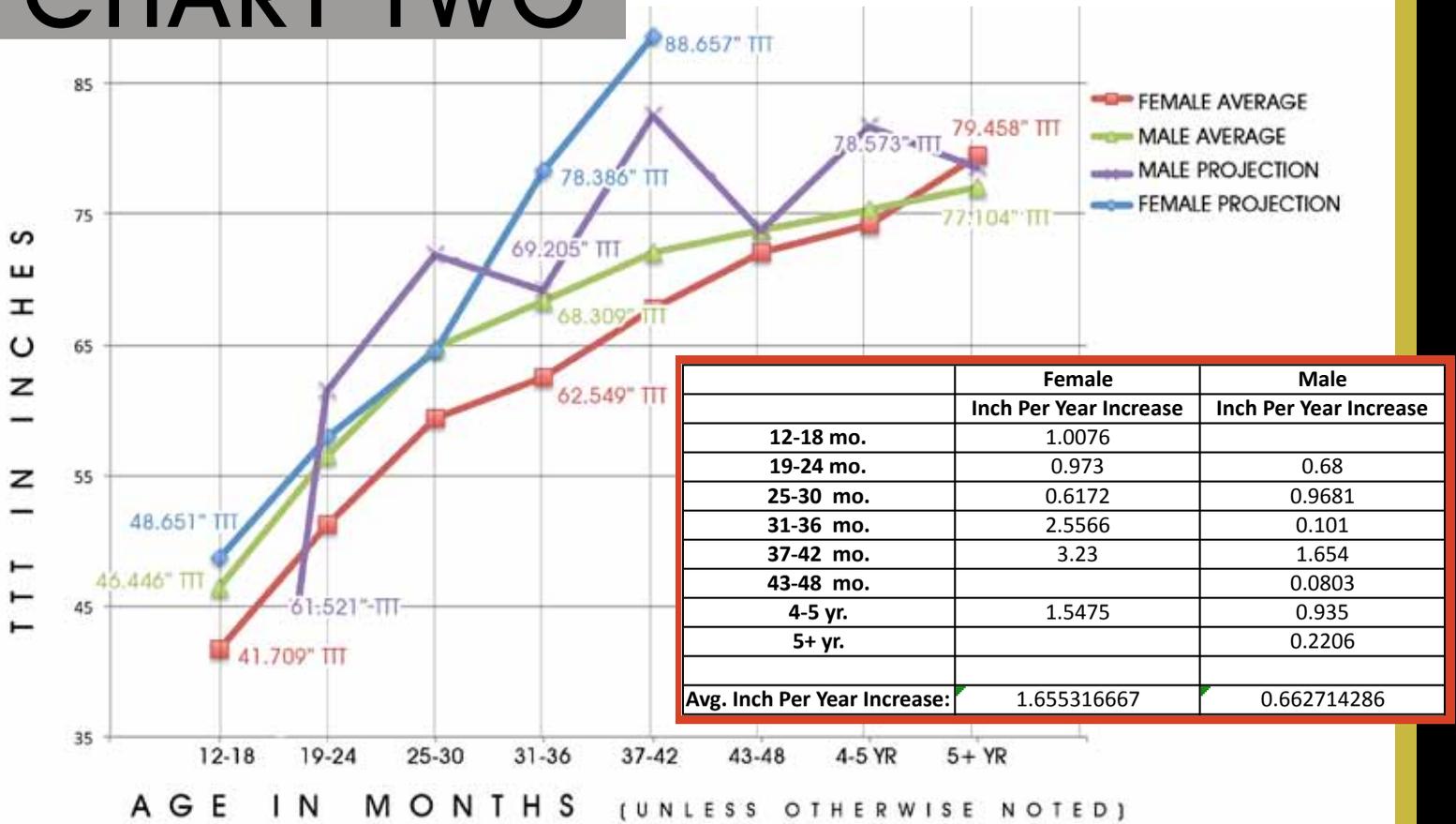
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CHART TWO



MALES

	2010 LWC	2010 HSC	2010 AVG	2011 LWC	2011 HSC	2011 AVG	2012 LWC	2012 HSC	2012 AVG	Total Avg.
12-18 mo.	49.17	48.25	48.71	46.165	41.29	43.7275	49.09	44.7125	46.90125	46.446
19-24 mo.	58.69	53.47	56.08	56.19	54.5	55.345	61.095	55.146	58.1205	56.515
25-30 mo.	64.19	64.041	64.1155	64.125	62.45	63.2875	68.75	65.29	67.02	64.808
31-36 mo.	68.33	68.464	68.397	68.77	66.89	67.83	72.79	64.61	68.7	68.309
37-42 mo.	69.335	69.335	69.335	74.17	71.139	72.6545	76.38	72.215	74.2975	72.096
43-48 mo.	75.08	71.063	73.0715	75.46	74.465	74.9625	72.75	73.875	73.3125	73.782
4-5 yr.	72.66	75.92	74.29	75.58	73.3	74.44	80.45	73.74	77.095	75.275
5+ yr.	78.99	74.626	76.808	79.49	74.58	77.035	80.15	74.79	77.47	77.104

*The average data for the categories left blank are insufficient. These categories did not show any positive growth over a three year span (on average). Therefore they could not be projected. Any projection would be pure speculation.

** This category shows a minimal projection due to the fact that in the official averaged data over a three year span the average TTT increased only .08 - .1", making the inch per year increase an average of less than .1".

	2013 Projected TTT Avg.	2014 Projected TTT Avg.	2015 Projected TTT Avg.	2016 Projected TTT Avg.	2017 Projected TTT Avg.
12-18 mo.					
19-24 mo.	58.801	59.481	60.161	60.841	61.521
25-30 mo.	67.988	68.956	69.925	70.893	71.861
31-36 mo.	68.801	68.902	69.003	69.104	69.205
37-42 mo.	75.952	77.606	79.260	80.914	82.568
43-48 mo.	73.393	73.473	73.554	73.634	73.714
4-5 yr.	78.030	78.965	79.900	80.835	81.770
5+ yr.	77.691	77.911	78.132	78.353	78.573

CHART TWO:

What about the rate at which females measurements are increasing vs. males? This chart shows the comparison of females vs. males based on the averaged official Tip-to-Tip (TTT) horn measurements from the Horn Showcase and Longhorn World Championship for both sexes from 2010 - 2012.

Based off this data it can be assumed that currently, female average Tip-to-Tip horn span is growing at a faster rate than males of the same ages. It would appear, in looking at the trends the data produces, that the rate at which females are being bred for horn is .99" in front of the rate at which males are growing.

According to the official records, the longest 2 year-old heifer measured at either competition in 2012 was Helm TC Laura's Mercy. She was born 10/7/10, is owned by Brett Ranch, and was bred by Helm Cattle Company. She measured 60-3/8" TTT at the Longhorn World Championship. Based on horn growth trends projected out through 2017 she is measuring 2.568" ahead. So if we're setting the standard of an exceptional heifer in the mid 50" TTT at 24 months today, by 2017 will we need to cull all those

below the 58-60" TTT mark by 24 months? At the measurement competitions held in 2012, the officially measured longest horned female was BL Rio Catchit, owned by Loomis Ranch. She measured 90-5/8" TTT at approximately five years old and twenty days. She beat the second placed animal by 7.5". BL Rio Catchit's 2012 measurement was 6.122" ahead of the 2017 projection for cows of the same age. The second placed animal was 1.32" below the 2017 projection and the third placed animal 13.253" behind projected data.

Respect Me was the longest horned male officially measured at either competition in 2012. He is owned by the Briscoe/Hunt Partnership. He officially measured 87" TTT at approximately six years and six months. Based on that measurement and the analyzing of our data, his measurement is 8.527" ahead of the curve based on 2017 projections for males aged five and over. He beat the second place animal by 7.31" and the third place animal by 9.19". All 3 of these bulls measured ahead of the 2017 projections, although two by only a small amount.

PROOF IS IN THE PROFIT

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"I am very impressed with Molly's charts and growth pattern data! I compared it to the 'Magnificent 7' data from 1985 and her estimates are so close it's scary! It's crazy to think that, on average, these cattle have been increasing their rate of horn growth at one inch per year since 1985!

If you are breeding modern day genetics such as Rio Grande, HCR, BL Rio Catchit, Jamakizm, Temptation, etc. then this is a great tool to set your program goals by! Typically, today's modern genetics grow like lightning for a few years, then slow down. For those breeding modern genetics and aiming for lateral horn growth, this is data is a keeper and serious breeders should use it to help set goals.

If you're breeding older genetics such as WR, Yates or Phillips - the genetics we refer to as cold blooded - the horns will grow real slow, but they'll keep growing at the same speed for many, many years - making this data a little harder to apply to your herd.

Readers should also keep in mind it is just a tool, because if Mother Nature says horns are going to twist this data will not be accurate. When a horn turns over it slows the growth - if your horns turn up and you have a total horn type female, your estimate at a young age based on this data will not be accurate."

You can learn more about Rockin H Longhorns by visiting www.RockinHLonghorns.com

Photo Courtesy of Oldenburg Farms

Photo Courtesy of Rockstar Whitetails

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CHART THREE

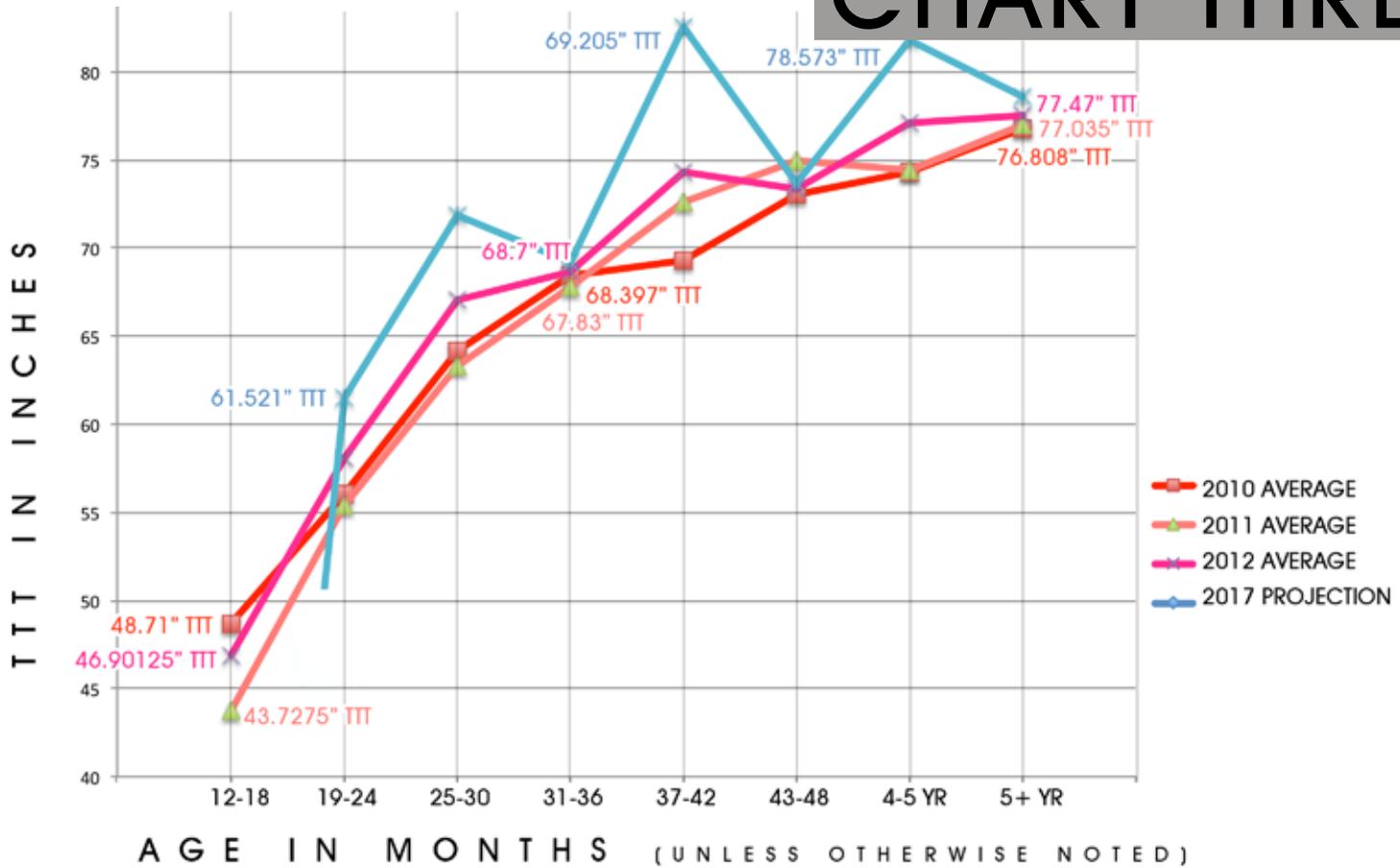


CHART THREE:

This chart shows the averaged official Tip-to-Tip (TTT) horn measurement from the Horn Showcase and Longhorn World Championship for males from 2010 - 2012 with projections of measurements by the year 2017.

Based off this data and the trends in growth from 2010 through 2012 it can be assumed that in 5 years, by 2017, these TTT measurements on page 5 would be feasible. That would mean that the following age groups would measure this far ahead of where they are today:

- 12-18 months: Insufficient data to project*
- 19-24 months: 13.741" TTT increase
- 25-30 months: 4.841" TTT increase
- 31-36 months: .505" TTT increase**
- 37-42 months: 8.271" TTT increase
- 43-48 months: .402" TTT increase**
- 4-5 years: 4.675" TTT increase
- 5+ years: 1.103" TTT increase

HIRED HAND DATA

One thing I began wishing I could see in the data gathered was how many, if any, of these offspring being measured officially were from 80" TTT parents - essentially if they already had a leg up in the game. In Longhorn genetics it is often assumed that if a calf has either or both parents over the 80" TTT mark it should exhibit an exceptional horn growth rate.

Since I could not get this information from the limited official competition data available, I decided to dig into Hired Hand and see if I could find any instances. *Using only measurements made public by our customers,* I was able to take a limited sample out of 83 calves bred by parents 80" TTT plus from which the owners were tracking measurements. I decided to analyze this data in comparison with the official measurement data for males and females in the 12 - 30

month age span. I did this because this seems to be the age span when animals have the most rapid horn growth increases recorded.

CHART FOUR:

As you can see, from chart four on the right, the red and purple lines are the average of official measurements from horn growth at the same age for that sex. The blue and green lines are the measurement data, although not official, from our limited sample of Hired Hand customers on offspring bred from two 80" TTT or larger parents and made public.

The data shows that for this age span calves with at least 80" TTT parents have explosive growth compared to the averaged data from official measurement competitions. Assuming that breeders bring their best animals to the horn measurement competitions and looking at the span that 80" parented offspring exceed those average measurements, it can be assumed that mating 80" TTT parents will result in breeding a calf that has the potential to be well ahead of the curve in terms of TTT horn growth.

" I think the easiest way to find predictability in horn is stacking genetics. Find as many 70" or 80" animals in a pedigree as possible. However, I feel the key is really based more on genetics. When you find the magic crosses that work it's enlightening. When you cross an 80" bull with an 80" cow you should get a high profile calf. Anything less could be a fault on the parents. It's the cows that out produce themselves that become legendary. When a 60" cow produces a 70" daughter or even an 80" daughter. Those genetics have the ability to out produce themselves exponentially compared to a cow who produces a replica. Some examples are Hatch's Candy Cane, Doherty 6 and Tari Graves."

*You can contact Bear Davidson
by visiting www.GandOTexasLonghorns.com*

While assessing publicly marked data from within Hired Hand websites I thought it would be interesting to run a few other reports which I made into the pie charts to the right.

There were 47,439 Texas Longhorns within the Hired Hand system as of 8/26/13. These are both active and reference Longhorns. Of the 47,439 offering public measurements, I thought you may find it interesting how many of those are calves from over 70" TTT parents and matings.

<u>ONE PARENT TTT"</u>	<u># OF CALVES</u>
70 to <75	1,320
75 to <80	885
80+ TTT	920

<u>BOTH PARENT TTT"</u>	<u># OF CALVES</u>
70 to <75	78
75 to <80	56
80+ TTT	77

PIE CHART ONE:

Of the 47,439 Longhorns mentioned earlier that are within Hired Hand, 431 of those animals have official event measurement(s) recorded by their owner and made public.

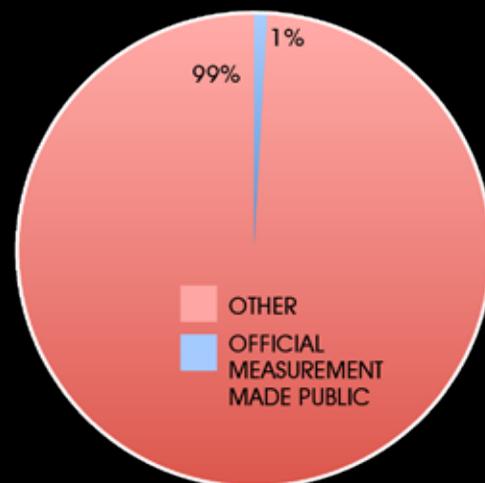
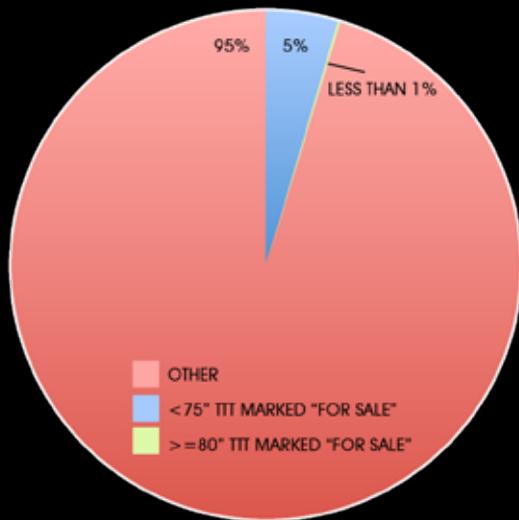
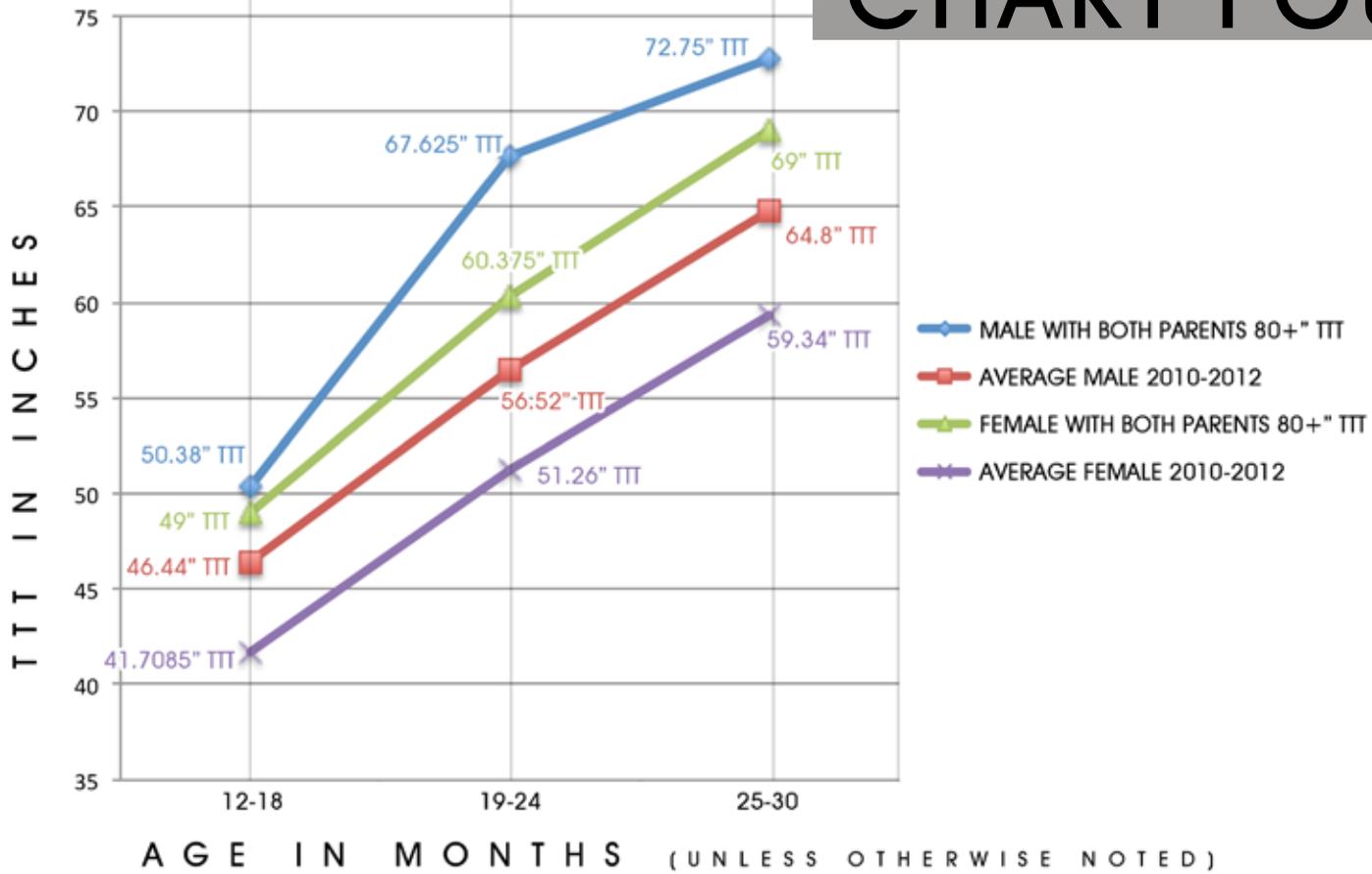


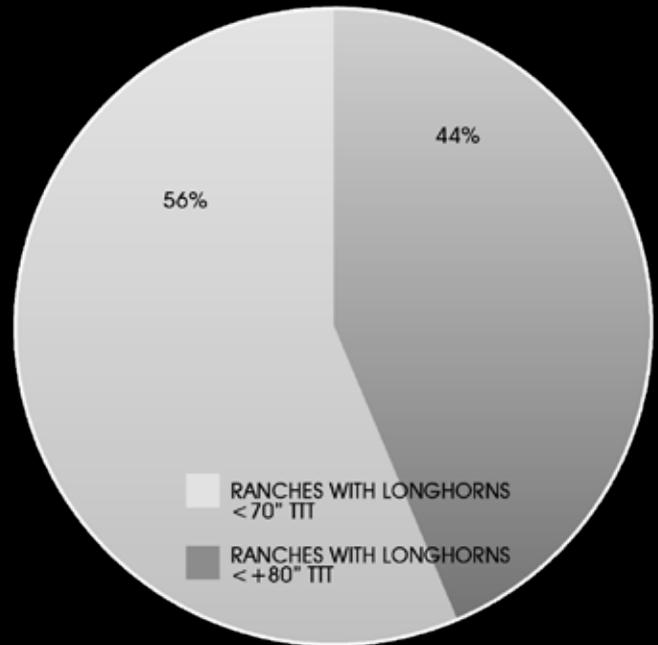
Photo Courtesy www.TLBAA.org

CHART FOUR



PIE CHART TWO:

There are 2,365 Longhorns in Hired Hand that have up to 75" TTT measurements publicly recorded and are also being categorized "For Sale." There are 84 being offered "For Sale" that have public measurements recorded over 75" TTT. At the time this article went to print, we were working on obtaining permission from owners to list these animals, by measurement category, in our free Hired Hand Sale Pen (www.hiredhandsalepen.com).



PIE CHART THREE:

Hired Hand offers websites to all sizes of Longhorn ranches. Most ranches use our Animal Management System (AMS) but a few do not. As of 8/26/13, of the ranches using our AMS, 56% publicly record having animals measuring over 70" TTT and 44% publicly showcase animals measuring 80" TTT and above.

"Today in our Industry we have a huge emphasis on horn. We want heifers to be pushing mid 50's TTT @ 24 months while bulls need to be pushing 65" TTT @ 24 months. Horn is very important in the market place. The ranches that I work with are also looking at the total package of milking ability, size and conformation, as well as a quiet disposition to go along with breeding for horn. Horn is what sells, but with out the rest of the package breeders aren't inclined to pay as extravagant of price for single trait animals. In today's Texas Longhorns you have to have it all."

*You can contact Justin Rombeck
at JustinTheLonghornMan@gmail.com.*



Photo Courtesy: www.RockinLonghorns.com



Photo Courtesy
www.BigValleyLonghorns.com

CONCLUSION:

In closing, I hope that you found this article helpful and informative to your breeding plans for the future. Although I consider myself more creative than data-scentric I have to say I found it enjoyable to analyze the trends of horn growth in our Industry

and think about where we may be heading in the next few years. Please don't hesitate to stop by our booth and visit about this data. I'd value your feedback on this article and other research and projections we can do to better educate breeders and plan for a bright future for this great breed.

FOOT NOTES:

1. DC COWBOY GRANDE, OWNED BY THE DEER CREEK/FAIRLEA LONGHORNS PARTNERSHIP.
WWW.DCLONGHORNS.COM; WWW.FAIRLEALONGHORNS.COM
2. BL RIO CATCHIT, OWNED BY LOOMIS RANCH LONGHORNS. WWW.LOOMISRANCHLONGHORNS.COM

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

MOLLY CLUBB

is a partner in HIRED HAND SOFTWARE.

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To contact MOLLY about this article or with LONGHORN or WEBSITE related questions you can email her at Molly@HiredHandSoftware.com or call 319-269-8903.