

Kit's Frame Score Lesson...

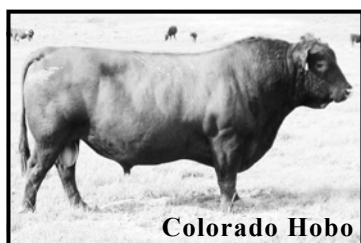
I have given my standard presentation all over North America. The very last thing I discuss is “Matching Cow Size and Type to your Forage Resources.” Here at Pharo Cattle Company, we want a cow that can survive on what our ranch produces with minimum inputs. After allowing Mother Nature to do the sorting for us for over twenty years, we know what will and will not work. As I share this information, people are all ears — until I mention frame score. When I say, “The cows that seem to work best in our program are a frame score 2 to 4,” many in the audience will quickly close their minds. You can almost hear the doors closing.



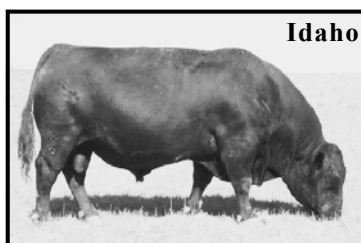
Why does this bother people so much? It reminds them of the belt-buckle high cattle that were so popular 50 to 60 years ago. Very few people believe the beef industry needs to go back to that type of animal. I usually show a picture similar to the one above and ask, “What do you think this bull’s frame score was?” I will almost always get answers that range from a 4-frame down to a 1-frame. In reality, this bull’s mature height was probably eight inches *shorter* than a 1-frame score. That bit of information usually gets a few people to crack open the doors of their mind again.

Next, I ask if anyone knows how tall a 4-frame cow is. A 4-frame cow is 50 inches tall. Folks, that is NOT a miniature! Pharo Cattle Company has some thick, easy-fleshing 4-frame cows that weigh over 1200 pounds. We have a few that weigh over 1300 pounds. A 4-frame bull is 54 inches tall. We have some thick, easy-fleshing 4-frame bulls that weigh well over a ton. How much bigger do we need our cattle? At this point, I will show a picture of Colorado Hobo — who had a frame score of 4.5 and weighed 2400 pounds. There is nothing little about this bull!

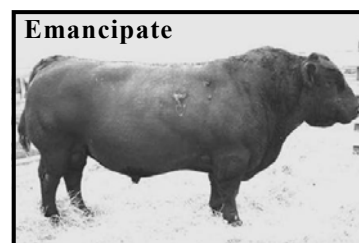
I will then show a picture of Idaho who was a 3.5 frame bull that weighed 2100 pounds. There is nothing little about this bull either. I end up showing a picture of Emancipate who was a 2.5 frame meat wagon. Emancipate was 51 inches tall and weighed over 1800 pounds. The doors are slowly opening. People are beginning to realize that 2 to 4-frame cows and bulls are NOT nearly as small as they thought they were.



4.5 Frame — 2400 lbs.



3.5 Frame — 2100 lbs.



2.5 Frame — 1850 lbs.

Most people think they know what a 5-frame cow or bull looks like. Therefore, they subconsciously think a 2.5 frame animal will be half that size. **WRONG!** What is the difference in inches between a 5-frame bull and Emancipate? Five inches — that’s all! That’s not even close to half size! Where will you find most of that 5-inch difference? Between the ground and the belly — which doesn’t weigh very much and is impossible to eat. Ironically, our 2 and 3-frame bulls will weigh more than many 5 and 6-frame bulls — and our bulls do it all on grass.

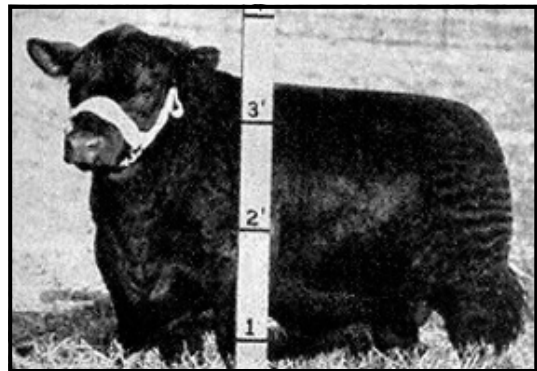
Our mature 2-frame cows weigh 1000 to 1050 pounds. Our mature 3-frame cows weigh 1100 to 1150 pounds — and our mature 4-frame cows weigh 1200 to 1250 pounds. If milk remains constant, efficiency will always increase as frame decreases. Smaller framed cows can wean a higher percentage of their own body weight than bigger framed cows. Surprisingly, many of the producers I visit with tell me they have 1100-pound cows. In most cases, though, their 1100-pound cows are taller and thinner than our 1100-pound cows.

Since most of the bulls sold in North America are 5 to 7-frame bulls, I have a pretty good idea what kind of cows most producers have without even seeing them. I'm always amused when someone tells me how long and how hard he has been working to reduce cow size — with very little success. Like begets like! If you keep using 6-frame bulls, you will continue to produce 6-frame cows. It's as simple as that! The only sure way to produce 3 and 4-frame cows is by using 2 to 4-frame bulls that were produced by 2 to 4-frame cows.

Pharo Cattle Company has been producing and marketing smaller framed bulls for many years. We've sold thousands of bulls. For the most part, our bulls will not cheat you on pounds; they will just put those pounds in a beefier package. Don't worry... calves sired by our bulls are not being discounted at the sale barn — even along the east coast where they are sorted for frame. Calves sired by our bulls work very well in the feedlot — especially if they are sold on the grid. Smaller framed cattle are able to marble much quicker and easier than bigger framed cattle.

Frame Score	Mature Cow Hip Height	Mature Bull Hip Height
2	46	50
3	48	52
4	50	54
5	52	56
6	54	58

Height is measured from the ground to the top of the back just above the hip bones.



This is NOT a 2-Frame Bull

It's just two inches. Don't get all freaked out the next time someone talks about a 4-frame bull or a 4-frame cow. A 4-frame animal is just two inches shorter than a 5-frame animal. The first thing most people say when they see our cows is, "They're not as small as I thought they would be." Seeing is believing. I hope this little frame score lesson has helped you to realize that our 2 to 4-frame cattle are NOT even close to the belt-buckle high cattle that were so popular 50 to 60 years ago. Our cattle are NOT nearly as extreme as many people like to think they are.



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"The only difference between a 4-frame cow and a 5-frame cow is two inches between the ground and the belly, which doesn't weigh very much and is impossible to eat."

~ Kit Pharo