

FARM

(Continued from Page 1)

of such unpronounceable breeds as Limousin, Maine-Anjou and Simmental. What next? Water buffalo? Cattle from Tibet? Purple steers?

Try Texas Longhorn, according to a story in the June issue of Smithsonian Magazine. Today's

Longhorns are descended from Spanish cattle brought to these shores by Christopher Columbus himself on his second voyage in 1493. The critters flourished in the often inhospitable lands of the Southwest. While their Scottish and English brethren were being reared on lush green pastures and grain, the Longhorns were learning to survive by browsing even the sorriest of hardscrabble terrain.

The breed flourished during the early years of this country's cattle industry, and it's estimated that upwards of 10 million Texas Longhorns were driven up the north trails between 1866 and 1890. From that high point, the breed shrank until it was facing extinction squarely in the face. An act of Congress in 1927, and a \$3000 appropriation, managed to keep the breed and - just as importantly - its gene pool alive.

The beef industry is showing new interest in the Texas Longhorn's performance. One South Dakota weight-gain comparison pitted the Longhorns against other breeds. The two Longhorn bulls tested showed an average daily gain of 3.3 pounds in the 112-day test. This compared with 3.3 pounds for the tested

Red Angus, 3.4 for Beefmaster, 3.8 for Charolais and so on.

Walter B. Scott, a Texas Longhorn breeder and past-president of the breed society, claims the breed is hardy, with excellent resistance to diseases as well as external and internal parasites. He says they're easy calvers, and that they could teach other breeds a thing or two about foraging.

And they're not just a breed for southern climes, either, since one of the foremost breeders is a Canadian.

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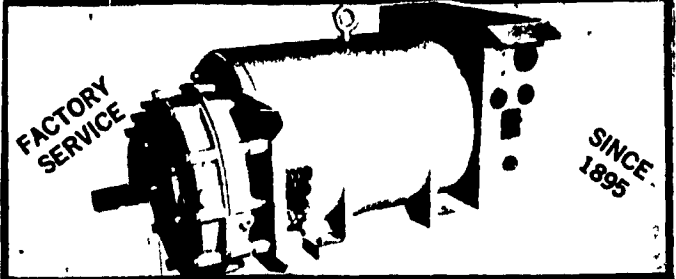
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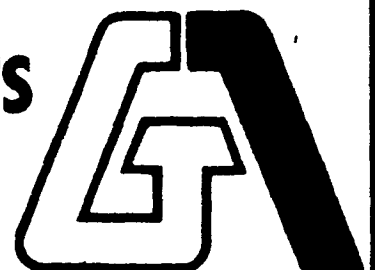
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