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The good news from the field

ONLINE



FARMERS GROUP MAKE BRASILIAN LIVESTOCK "TAKE A LEAP"



In his farm Santa Fé, located in Santa Helena of Goiás, 400 kilometers from Brasília, Pedro Merola is son and grandson of farmers, raise cattle with a rare organization in Brazil. He's known as "finisher animals for abate". Three months before the abate, he receives animals from breeders localized at a distance of 700 km.

His job is to finish the fatten of animals for abate. Merola feeds the oxes with a special diet based on corn silage, sorghum and soya bran planted in the farm. The cost for this service is US\$2,30 the daily per head. Even so, it has a waiting list. The reason is simple: the Santa Fé is a phenomenon for fattening their visitors.

The animals confined in paddocks,

gain 1,7 pounds per day – it's 153 pounds in 90 days. Profits are also superlative. Merola earns US\$ 3.265,00 per hectare in the year, while the national average is US\$205.

Santa Fé will confine 70.000 oxes and cows this year and it should to earn US\$24,5 millions. In 2015, the objective is to get 100.000 heads and US\$37 millions of income. "While the rule in the industry is doing everything, I specialize myself", said Merola.

Since 2000, while corn tillage and soya put Brazil at the top of the global ranking of productivity, the livestock progressed in slow running. The country has the largest commercial cattle herd and is the largest exporter of steaks in the world, but always sinned by the low efficiency of their farms and the questionable quality of the meat – at least in comparison with American and Argentine steaks.

But what is happening in the farm Santa Fé and between a growing group of elite creators, reveals that the Brazilian cattle industry is finally going to the 21st century. Past four years, the Brazilian herd grew up only 2%, but the production of meat in the country increased by 20% - it's a record.

On average, our productivity is still very below to the American. But in places like Santa Fé, each ox yields up to 330 pounds of meat – it's the first time that the Brazilian elite has reached the global elite in this sector. Like happened in agriculture, Brazilian creators were inspired by the good examples from outside, but they are developing their own way of raising cattle.

In contrast to the United States, where the animals spend a lifetime confined, here where there is pasture during the year, it's standardizing a specialization of the chain. A breeder takes care of the production of calves, the other receives the young animal and feeds until majority others prepares to abate, the ox is confined, for 90 days.

"Brazil has created its own model of elite livestock", says Eduardo Alves de Moura, president of the National Association of Feedlot. The association estimates that this year 10% of abates, the equivalent of 4 millions of heads, will be confined animals. There's a decade ago, it was not even half that.

In this process, there is a support from Embrapa Beef Cattle, based on Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul, and universities like the College of Agriculture Luiz de Queiroz, Piracicaba, in São Paulo, are researching dietary supplements and the potential new crossings. But the big transformation comes from the producers themselves.

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