



GET THE POINT!

GRADE: 4-5

SUBJECT: Mathematics

NATIONAL STANDARD(S)

(3-5) MA: 4.4, 4.7-9, 4.13, 4.15

THEME: Ranching

FOOD AND FIBER TOPIC: I-A; II-C,D

LEARNER OBJECTIVE

The student will measure the width of the horns on drawings of longhorn cattle and then convert the measurements from inches to centimeters and from inches to feet.

VOCABULARY

branding—Burning or freezing a mark into an animal's hide to show ownership.

ear notching—Cutting notches into an animal's ears for identification purposes.

vaqueros—Mexican cowboys.

BACKGROUND

Ranching was developed by the Spanish. They brought the first cattle to the New World and taught ranching to the people who lived in the area we now know as Mexico. Some of these cattle escaped and ran wild on the plains of Texas. They were the ancestors of the wild longhorns.

In the beginning, ranch hands did all their work on foot. Only the privileged Spanish ranchers rode horses. In time, the ranchers discovered their workers needed to move more quickly to avoid the deadly long horns and feisty temperaments of their cattle. So the Mexican vaqueros, or cowboys, became skilled riders. They were the models for the American cowboy.

The first American cowboys rounded up wild longhorn cattle in Texas Territory and drove them north to railway stops like Dodge City, Kansas. There the cattle would be herded into railroad cars and sent to the eastern United States to provide meat for the people living there.

Many of the longhorns that made the first cattle drives were gathered in a criminal way. Texas cowboys would cross into Mexico, gather wandering cattle, and drive them back across the Rio Grande River into land not governed by Mexican laws. The longhorns may have been marked in some fashion by the vaqueros—by ear notching or branding—but in Texas Territory it did not matter.

Eventually ranch wars over longhorn cattle erupted along the river. Hired cowboys on both sides of the river would cross to steal longhorns, only to have them stolen back by cowboys on the other side. Many cowboys were killed in these wars.

One of the most famous longhorn steers, Old Blue, was owned by Charles Goodnight, a Texas rancher who blazed the Goodnight - Loving Trail to make way for other ranchers who would come later. Old Blue was a lead steer. One characteristic of cattle and other herd animals is that they always follow the lead of a dominant member. These natural leaders are the first to cross streams, gullies and other obstacles, showing the others the way. Old Blue made the long trek from west Texas to Dodge City eight times, leading an estimated

10,000 head of cattle. After his last cattle drive, Old Blue was turned out to live his final days in leisure, in a pasture near the Goodnight Ranch. When he died, his massive horns were mounted and hung in the Goodnight ranch office.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

1. Review with students the steps required to measure an item and to convert the information into real numbers using a scale measurement.
2. Hand out student worksheet. As a class, read the brief history of longhorn cattle and discuss their effect on the American cattle industry. Read the directions, and have students complete the student worksheets.
3. Share background information.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

1. On the floor of your classroom, have students mark off the spans between the horns of longhorn steer using the measurements from their student worksheets.
2. The following information shows how many cattle were driven to market between 1867 and 1881. Write the information on the chalkboard, and have students use it to create pictorial or line graphs.

1867	35,000
1868	75,000
1869	350,000
1870	300,000
1871	600,000
1872	350,000
1873	405,000
1874	166,000
1875	151,618
1876	321,998
1877	201,159
1878	265,646
1879	257,927
1880	394,784
1881	250,000

3. Have students identify the year most cattle were shipped to market and the year the fewest were shipped. Ask students if they can think of reasons for the change in numbers. (For the first five years, the number of longhorn cattle leaving Texas increased steadily. An oversupply brought prices down dramatically, and two years later a crippling depression hit.) Have students calculate the total number of cattle that went to market during this 15- year period and the average number.

RESOURCES

Student Books

Freedman, R. (1985). Cowboys of the Wild West. Clarion.
 Johnson, N. (1993). Jack Creek Cowboy. Dial.
 Murdoch, D. H. (1993). Cowboy. Eyewitness Books, Knopf.

Schlissel, L. (1995). Black Frontiers: A History of African American Heroes in the Old West. Simon and Schuster for Young Readers.

Warner, G. (1986). Mystery Ranch. Whitman,

Teacher Resources

National Cattlemen's Beef Association, 1301 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Ste. 300, Washington, DC 20004.

Society for Range Management, 1839 York St., Denver, CO 80206.

Texas Longhorn Breeders Association of America, 2315 North Main St., Suite 402, Fort Worth, Texas 76106, 817-625-6241.

"Western Cattle Trail," Kansas Heritage Center, 1000 Second Ave., PO Box 1207, Dodge City, KS 67801-1207, 316-227-1616, Fax 316-227-1695 (map tracing the old cattle trail from Texas through Oklahoma and Kansas, including the main rivers the trail crossed, Stock no. 222, \$1).

Related Internet Websites

(see Food & Fiber Systems webpage – links)

EVALUATION

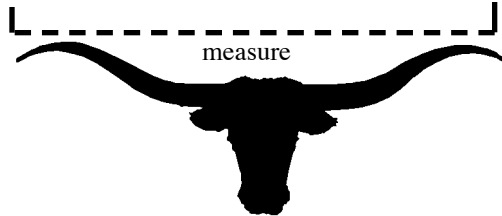
Answers for the student worksheet are as follows: 1) 2 3/4 in., 6.35 cm., 5 1/2 ft.; 2) 2 in., 5.08 cm, 4 ft.; 3) 2 1/4 in., 5.715 cm., 4 1/2 ft.; 4) 1 3/4 in., 4.445 cm., 3 1/2 ft.; 5) 1 1/2 in., 3.81 cm., 3 ft.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

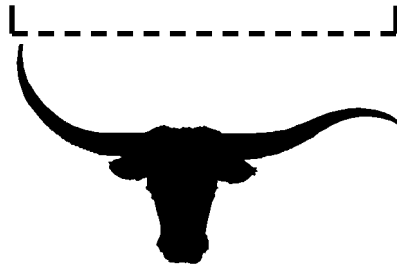
This lesson adapted from Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom, Department of Agricultural Education, Communications and 4-H Youth Development, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078.

Get the Point!

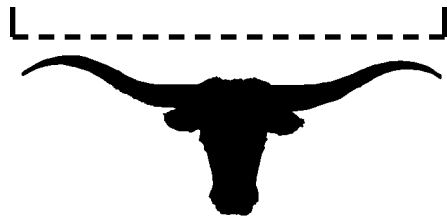
Read the information below about longhorn cattle. Then measure the span between the tips of each longhorn's horns. Measure the spans in inches and then in centimeters. Use the scale measure at the bottom of the page to convert the measurements into feet.



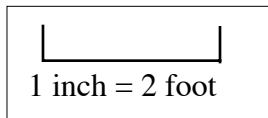
- $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches
 6.35 centimeters
 $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet



- _____ inches
 _____ centimeters
 _____ feet



- _____ inches
 _____ centimeters
 _____ feet



Texas longhorn cattle are the descendants of cattle that Christopher Columbus brought to the New World on his second visit, in 1493. The cattle provided fresh meat for early Spanish settlers and were used for trading.

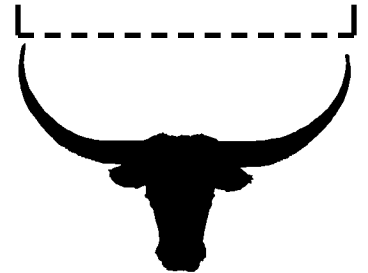
The cattle were allowed to roam freely in the wide open spaces of the New World. Over time, some of the cattle wandered away. These untame, or *feral*, longhorns crossed freely between Mexico and Texas Territory.

Longhorns adapt easily to rapid weather changes and will try to eat all types of grasses. They are a healthy breed and can travel a great distance without much water.

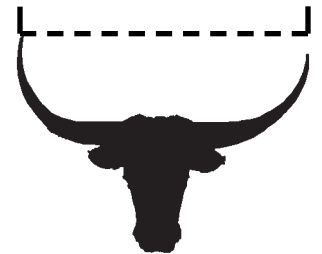
Soldiers returning from the Civil War heard grand tales of fat cattle wandering free over unclaimed Texas land. Many were eager to round up their own herds of longhorn cattle and try their hands at ranching.

The demand for fresh beef, the development of refrigeration and the expanding railroad drove the price of cattle up. But the cattle had to be delivered to the railroad stops, where they could be loaded and transported to the eastern states. The only way to get them to market in Wichita or Abilene, Kansas, was to walk them. The solution was the famous cattle drives of the Old West.

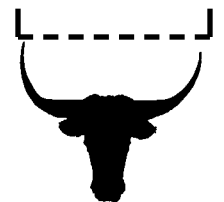
Adapted from Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom.



- _____ inches
 _____ centimeters
 _____ feet



- _____ inches
 _____ centimeters
 _____ feet



- _____ inches
 _____ centimeters
 _____ feet

