

BRIGHTON — A delegation of 34 Argentinian ranchers attended the Cattle Country Sale on Aug. 30 in Brighton. The group was escorted by University of Florida - Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences associate professor Dr. Nicolas Dilocenzo, who took them on a whirlwind seven-day tour of some of the state's agricultural highlights.

The beef producers hailed from northern Argentina, which has a climate and terrain very similar to that of Brighton and Big Cypress. They went to livestock markets, ranches, the Florida Cattlemen's Association headquarters and other businesses that contribute to the state's agricultural economy.

Argentinian Braham-influenced cattle weigh about 200 pounds less than the Tribe's Brangus and they have much lower pregnancy rates.

"They learned they can breed the calves younger, at 14 to 15 months," Dilocenzo said. "The prices are also much better here. They only get about \$500 for a heifer."

Other challenges facing the Argentinians include an export market that isn't active enough and ranchers rely on grass instead of feed for their herds. The group was fascinated by the value of genetics here, which is largely absent from the Argentinian beef producers.

In Argentina, a sale like the one in Brighton does not exist. Instead of using video technology and the internet, at Argentinian cattle sales the animals are shown in the ring which can stress the animals.

"They are here to learn and then apply these concepts in Argentina," Delorenzo said.

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