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A&M professor's research will keep longhorns short

By Jacqueline Mason

THE BATTALION

For many years, Texas A&M professors have researched the effects of chromosome mutations in cattle. Now, one finding is proving to be beneficial for both livestock breeders and the cattle themselves.

James Womack, a veterinary pathobiology professor, said Texas A&M researchers have been successful in locating the gene related to the growth of horns on cattle.

By pinpointing that gene, breeders can determine which cattle will not have horns and, through selective breeding, eliminate cattle with horns, he said.

"They now have the ability to genetically eliminate the horn," he said.

Traditionally, ranchers have mechanically dehorned cattle.

"There's a lot of money put out each year for dehorning cattle," Womack said.

A second advantage to breeding hornless cattle is that dairy and feed-lot cattle will be spared injury inflicted by horned cattle, he said.

But, Womack said it is difficult to completely eliminate horns on cattle because it is a recessive trait.

Locating the gene for horned cattle is just the beginning of the possibilities in genetic research relating to cattle, he said.

In laboratories around the world, researchers are studying cattle chromosomes relating to traits such as milk production, meat quality and resistance to disease.

Professors at A&M may have even discovered a gene that shows resistance to brucellosis, an infectious disease in cattle.

Texas A&M Veterinary pathobiology Professor Garry Adams said if this gene can be identified, breeders could control the spread of brucellosis among livestock.

"We could, by selective breeding, increase the rate of frequency of resistance in a population," he said.

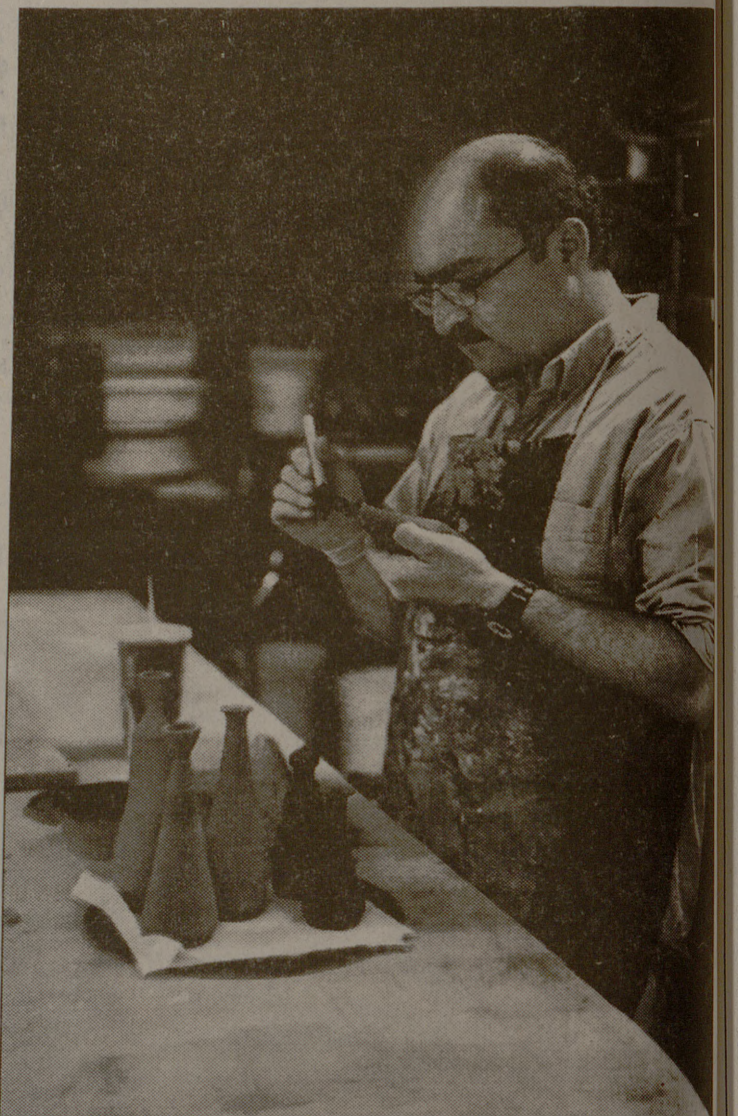
Another finding researchers are excited about, he said, suggests that cattle that are genetically resistant to brucellosis may also be resistant to tuberculosis and salmonellosis, a disease sometimes leading to typhoid fever.

If cattle can be made resistant to salmonellosis, Adams said, the disease may have a harder time being spread to the human population.

Right now, the basic goal of researchers is simply to map the chromosomes and identify the genes for a variety of traits related to cattle, Womack said.

"We are developing a map that allows us to find markers of economically important traits," he said.

Shaping up . . .



Karen Puckett/SPECIAL TO THE BATTALION

Khaled Tarazi is putting his pots through the final steps of glazing before their last firing in the crafts center of University Plus. The crafts center, located in the MSC, will close after Dec. 18.

Correction

In Wednesday's issue of The Battalion, a headline on page two incorrectly indicated that the Aggie Bucks office had moved to Sbis. The office has not moved to Sbis. It has moved into the Pavilion.

The Battalion regrets the error.

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November 29, 1993

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12:30 pm Ross Elementary, "The Nutcracker"

THURSDAY, DEC. 2nd:
12:00 pm B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation, Hanukkah Presentation
12:30 pm Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. New Alpha Chapter, Pre-"Greek Expo" Step Show

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