

What Does a “P” Number Mean in the ABBA Herd Book?

By Paul Maulsby, Executive Vice President, American Brahman Breeders Association

As Executive Vice President, I always aim to share information that’s helpful to our members and those considering membership in the American Brahman Breeders Association (ABBA). One common questions I receive—whether in the office, at events, or on the phone—is, “What does the ‘P’ stand for in a Brahman registration number?”

It’s a great question, and like many details in our breed registry, there’s a clear and practical purpose behind it.

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What Is a “P” Number?

The “P” stands for Pending Registration. This designation is used when an animal is in the process of having its sire and dam confirmed through DNA parentage verification using ABBA approved DNA markers.

When an animal requires parent verification, it is entered into the ABBA system with a temporary registration number that includes a “P” prefix. This allows the animal to be tracked and remain visible in our records while the DNA testing is underway. Additionally, the laboratory requires each DNA sample to be associated with a unique identifier—so the “P” number serves that function during the verification process.

Once both the sire and dam are confirmed by the lab, the animal is assigned its permanent registration number, and the “P” is removed.

This added layer of transparency strengthens the accuracy of our Herd Book and reinforces ABBA’s commitment to maintaining the integrity of our registry.

Why Parent Verification Matters

Parent verification isn’t just a technical formality—it’s a foundational tool for building trust and accuracy in our breed records. As we continue implementing our 5-Year DNA Plan, this process will provide us with more reliable data and insights to better serve Brahman breeders.

Whether you’re a seedstock producer, a commercial cattleman, or a potential buyer, confidence

in the pedigree of an animal matters. In today's cattle industry—where genetic tools and decisions have real financial implications—verified lineage builds market value, informs breeding programs, and drives long-term breed improvement.

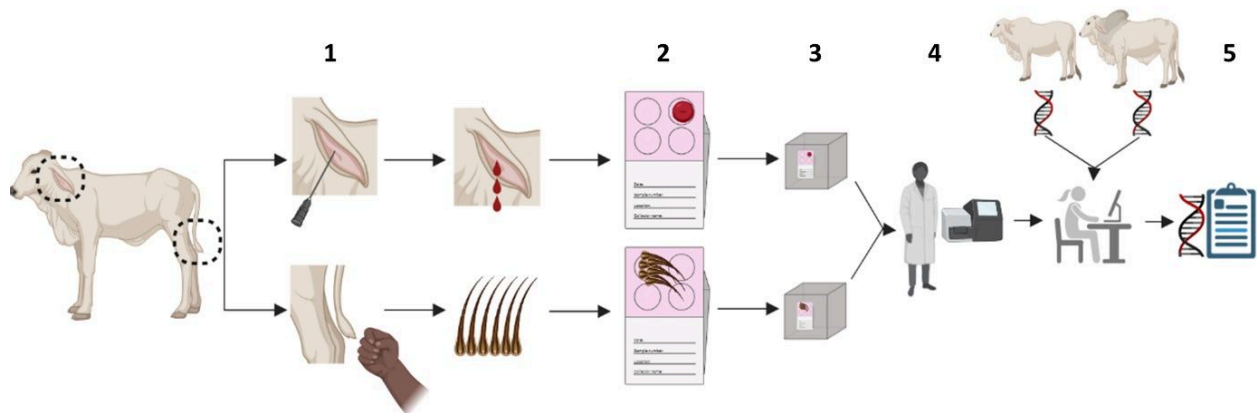


image from The University of Florida

The “P” Number and Performance-Only Designations

In addition to pending DNA verification, the “P” prefix may also be used in another context: **performance-only registration.**

There are two scenarios in which a “P” number may appear:

1. **Pending Registration Status** – As described above, this is assigned while DNA parent verification is being completed.
2. **Performance-Only Registration** – This is used to record animals—particularly in commercial programs—when the goal is to track performance data, but not to fully register the animal. This option allows sires and dams to receive credit for their progeny in the ABBA system.

Performance-only registrations are free and will show up under your herd. They’re a valuable tool for those looking to document and track productivity without pursuing full registration.



What a “P” Number Does Not Allow

While the “P” number is an important step in the process, it does not imply full registration or certain qualifications. It’s important to understand what a “P” number does not represent:

- **It does not override other registration requirements.**
Animals must still meet all Herd Book rules regarding breed composition, eligibility, and documentation.
- **It does not certify breed purity.**
The “P” confirms listed parentage only—it does not determine or alter breed classification or percentage.
- **It does not automatically qualify the animal for AI sire or donor dam status.**
Additional DNA testing, documentation, and formal approval are required for artificial insemination or embryo transfer eligibility.
- **It does not guarantee show or sale eligibility.**
ABBA-sanctioned events may require additional criteria—such as classification, age, or regional qualifications—and the animal must have a permanent registration number, not one with a “P,” to be eligible.

In short, the “P” number is a temporary but essential tool that helps us manage the DNA verification process with clarity and integrity. It supports our ongoing efforts to provide accurate records, improve genetic tracking, and deliver value to our members.

If you have any questions about registration status, DNA testing, or how to begin the parent verification process, please don’t hesitate to contact the ABBA office. We’re here to help.

