

International Classification), vegetation of caatinga and annual average precipitation around 600 mm, where the Pé-Duro (Figure 6) herd is kept in extensive cattle-rearing system during all stages of life.



Figure 6. Pé-Duro bull in Caatinga biome.

Since 1985, production data from the herd has been collected periodically by Embrapa Mid-North, where quantitative and qualitative traits were measured in animals of both sexes, with age ranging from birth to 22 years old. However, studies on characterization, evaluation and use are still not concluded. Figure 7 shows the website of the Brazilian Association of Pé-Duro Cattle Breeders.

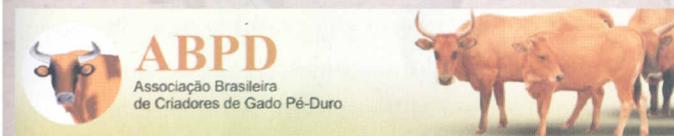


Figure 7. Brazilian Pé-Duro Cattle Breeder's Association Official Website.

Source: www.abpd.com.br

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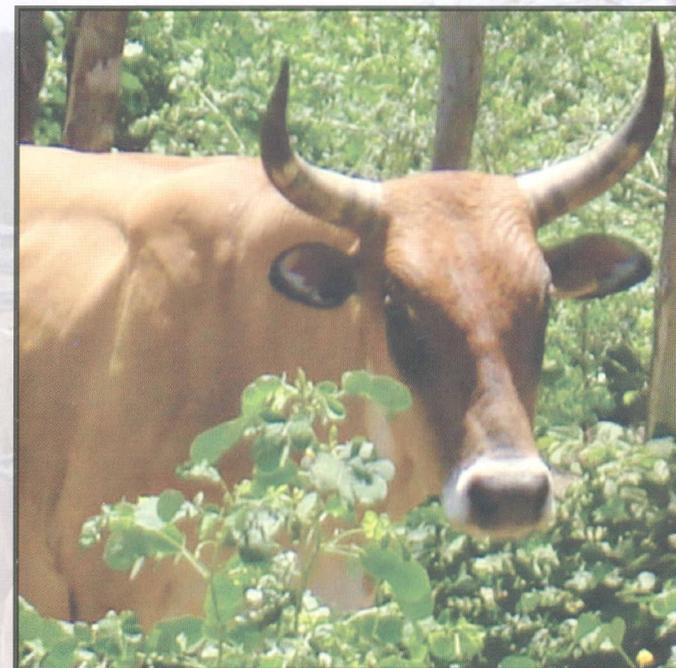


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PÉ-DURO



THE LOCAL CATTLE FROM SEMIARID AREAS OF BRAZIL



Meio-Norte

The Local Cattle From Semiarid Areas of Brazil

Pé-Duro, that means Hard Hoof in English, is a common denomination for a local breed of cattle that dwells in the semiarid area of Brazil's Northeast Region (Figure 1).

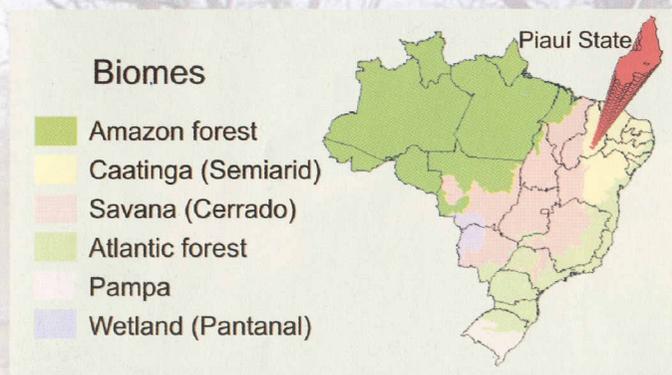


Figure 1. Brazilian biomes, homeland of many local breeds.

Brazilian domestic animal breeds are products of natural selection pressure over the years giving rise to animals adapted to the prevailing environment in which they were selected. The main importance of these breeds is related to the socio-economic development of the vast and diverse regions of Brazil. Many of these breeds are under threat of extinction due to genetic erosion arising from widespread crossbreeding, mainly with Nellore (*Bos taurus indicus*) type of cattle.

A singular breed of cattle, named Pé-Duro, was formed in semiarid regions, in a difficult environment, with harsh climate, low rainfall and high temperatures all year around. These breed takes advantage of poor pastures and are known for their exceptional rusticity. The potential loss of the Pé-Duro cattle from the semiarid regions of the northeastern of Brazil represents the extinction of a

unique gene pool. Therefore, a conservation program was initiated by Embrapa Mid-North in 1983 for the Pé-Duro cattle, indigenous to the “caatinga” ecological regions of northeast Brazil, characterized by xerophytes vegetation not found anywhere else in the world (Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5).



Figure 2. Variety of coat colors in Pé-Duro herd.



Figure 3. Herd with the most common coat colors: yellow and red, and in various shades.



Figure 4. Partial view of a Pé-Duro herd.



Figures 5. Pé-Duro cattle in the Caatinga biome.

The establishment of a *in situ* conservation herd by the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa), located at the experimental station of Embrapa Mid-North, in São João do Piauí City, State of Piauí, with a area of 1579.5 hectares, situated between 08° 26' and 08° 54' south latitude, 42° 19' and 42° 45' west longitude, altitude of 222 m, dry tropical climate (BSH, according to the Köppen