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CARCASS TRAITS OF PUREBRED AND CROSSBRED STEERS RAISED IN SOUTHERN BRAZIL¹.

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The objective of this work was to evaluate the effect of genotype on carcass traits of steers slaughtered at about 24 months of age. The evaluated genotypes were purebred Angus (ANAN), Hereford (HHHH) and Nellore (NENE) and crossbred Angus × Caracu (ANCR), Angus × Hereford (ANHH) and Angus × Nellore (ANNE). The slaughter criterion was when they reached at least 3mm of back fat thickness. The ANNE genotype had higher chilled carcass weight compared to animals ANAN, ANHH, HHHH and NENE (272.2 vs. 235.1, 242.8, 240.4 and 209.6 kg, respectively), but did not differ from ANCR (255.7 kg). The NENE animals presented the lowest forequarter weight (39.0 kg) and did not differ only from ANAN (44.2 kg) and ANHH (44.8 kg) animals. The rib weight of the NENE genotype (13.8 kg) was lower when compared with all the other groups and the crossbreds ANNE and ANCR produced heavier ribs than HHHH (19.4, 20.3 vs. 17, 3 kg respectively). The ANCR, ANNE and purebred HHHH produced heavier hindquarters than NENE (58.2, 60.3, 55.4 vs. 49.7 kg respectively). The ANNE animals had highest chilled carcass yields (53.6%) not differing only from the NENE (50.9%). The NENE showed lower rib yield (13.3%) but higher hindquarter yield (48.6%) when compared to the average of the other genotypes (15.5% and 46.6% respectively). Crossbreeding of Angus with Nellore and Caracu breeds can be used to increase the chilled carcass weight and yield of beef steers.