Fact Sheet: Miniature Texas Longhorn  
*Bos taurus ssp.*

**Description:**
- Height: Up to 3ft 8in (114.3 cm) tall at hip
- Weight: 350-800 pounds (159-363 kg)
- Sexual dimorphism: Females horns tend to be smaller. Males weigh significantly more, and tend to be towards the upper end of the weight range.
- Physical Description- Small variant breed of Texas longhorn cattle. Characteristically long horns that slope upwards and sometimes curl. The horns are hollow, and grow from a bony core.
- Coloration- can be any color or mix of colors, but dark red-brown and white color mixes are the most dominant.

**In the Wild**

**Habitat and Range:**
- Geographic range- Domesticated. The wild ancestors of cattle were found in northern Africa, Europe, and southern Asia.
- Preferred Habitat- Grasslands, Prairie, Pasture

**Diet:**
- Herbivorous
- Grasses and grains

**Adaptations:**
- The Texas longhorn is a breed of cattle that usually a beef animal and is known for its lean beef, which is lower in fat, cholesterol and calories than most beef.
- Miniature longhorns however, are usually kept as pets, and are entertainment animals. They are easier to care for and require fewer resources than full size longhorn.
- Cloven Hoof- For speed, endurance and durability to travel long distances.
- Ruminants- 4 stomachs to help digest hard to digest grasses and plants. Part of the digestion process involves regurgitating their food (called cud), and re-chewing it to help break it down.
- Cattle can see almost $360^0$ around, with a slight blind spot directly behind them. This adaptation helps in predator detection.

**Lifespan:**
- Texas longhorn cattle can live to an average age of 25 years old.

**Ecosystem relationships:**
- Land is often cleared of natural habitat for cattle pastures, and is a major cause of habitat loss, especially in developing countries and tropical rainforest regions. Overgrazing and poor land use practices compound the issue, making land unsuitable, and when looked at from a grand scale, can even cause massive ecosystem level
problems, such as drought.

- Cattle are a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Their digestive process releases methane, which continues to be produced by methanogenic bacteria after the animal has defecated. Greenhouse gases thicken the atmosphere and cause global average temperatures to increase.
- Overgrazing can cause erosion, and the introduction of non-native grasses and herbaceous plants, which degrade the habitat’s viability for wildlife.

Reproduction:

- Cattle mate year round, though more calves are born in spring than in other seasons.
- Gestation – 9 months
- Litter size- 1-2 calves.
- Young calves are precocial- they are able to walk and follow their mothers within minutes from birth.
- Reproductively mature at about 1 year

Activity/ Behavior:

- Diurnal- Active in the daytime
- Cattle prefer social settings, and prefer to form herds. Herds tend to follow leader individuals.
- Mothers will defend their calves if threatened.

Other “fun facts”:

- Cattle get most of their protein content from digesting the bacteria that help break down cellulose in grasses in one of their stomachs.
- Cattle average only 4 hours of sleep per day.
- Cattle have no upper incisors, but use the rough pads on the roof of the mouth, in addition to molars, to help chew their food. They pull the grass into their mouths with their tongues.
- On average, cattle drink 30 gallons of water and 95 pounds of food per day, spending about 6 hours a day eating and 8 hours chewing their cud.

Conservation Status and Threats:

- Domestic species, so no associated conservation issues

At the Zoo

- Ox: Born 3/25/13 Sire Royal Smoke, Dam Princess- Parents 38” tall.
- Kit-Kat: Born 7/9/13 Sire Royal Smoke, Dam Ruby.
- Purchased from Bogle Farms Sorrento, FL. Small family run farm on the outskirts of Orlando

What We Can Do

- Reduce consumption of beef and meat products to cut down on habitat loss and greenhouse gas production.
- Make environmentally responsible lifestyle decisions to help conserve habitat – conserve energy and resources, reduce litter and pollution
• Support the conservation efforts of local organizations like The Maryland Zoo as well as organizations working in the field to protect wildlife and conserve habitat
• Be a responsible pet owner – not all animals make good pets for everyone, make sure that you know how to properly care for an animal before getting it as a pet

References: