



Cow Chips
July/August 2012

GAA member honored for Historic Herd

The Historic Angus Herd Award is presented to Angus breeders or immediate families who have been in continuous production of registered Angus cattle for 50 years or more. The American Angus Association® is honored to recognize Black Grove, Newberry, S.C., as a Historic Angus Herd.

The Black Grove herd began in 1962 and continues

today with founder Walter D. Shealy III. Shealy's interest in cattle began while showing Angus heifers in 4-H, and he credits Ollie Dunkle, his county extension agent, and parents for his success in the Angus business.

As his passion for the cattle industry continued to grow, so did his herd. Shealy purchased his first cow for \$135, at the age of 14, from Elmer Epting of Newberry, S.C. When he was 16 years old, Shealy received a loan to purchase the land to begin Black Grove farm, which now consists of 400 acres and 200 head of Angus cattle.

Shealy and his son, Dixon, still manage the farm with the philosophy, "Fundamentals survive fads." The Black Grove farm consists of cattle with multiple-selection criteria, including: longevity, performance expected progeny differences (EPDs) and carcass data.

Shealy continues to stay busy with his interests in agriculture and chairs several committees to help continue the future of the industry. He serves as the board chairman for Boys Farm, Inc.; director of South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities; and is committee chair for the South Carolina Angus Association Hall of Fame. Previous involvement includes serving as president for the South Carolina Angus Association, and on the board of directors for the South Carolina Angus Association.

The story of this Historic Angus Herd, and those like it, is what will keep the breed strong. Visit www.angus.org for more information on the Historic Angus Herd Award or to view a list of awarded members since the program began in 1988.

Crossbred bull 'fix': Composites may trade predictability for simplicity

By Miranda Reiman, *Certified Angus Beef*

A good crossbreeding program takes some background in genetics, a big enough herd and land base, good bull suppliers and time to figure all that out. Producers looking for a simpler route to heterosis often opt to use a composite bull.

"In order for a crossbreeding operation to maximize heterosis, it takes a lot of different pasture, a lot of management, which because of size and time a lot of people can't devote to it," says Jarold Callahan, president of Express Ranches, Yukon, Okla. "You basically have to have different herds within your herd."

So the composite bull market was born, where breeding stock is billed as already having that built-in hybrid vigor.

"Implementing crossbreeding can be somewhat daunting," says Nevil Speer, Western Kentucky University animal scientist. "Many operations would rather forgo such effort if production can be maintained while also ensuring relative absence of problems. As a result, producers are often encouraged to utilize composite bulls as a simplified means to boost heterosis and subsequent production."

But Callahan says it's not always a "quick fix." Express has sold hundreds of Limousin-Angus crosses over the years, but recently decreased the number of composites (F1) offered on an annual basis.

"A lot of people we sent F1 bulls to were very disappointed because of gene segregation and what was being transmitted from each parent," he says. "Some progeny of these bulls really favored traits of one breed and some favored traits of the other, some looked Angus and some looked Continental. You ended up with a set of calves that were not only visually different, but a lot

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AI training offered to cattlemen

Southeast Select Sires, Inc., has scheduled an Artificial Insemination (AI) School for October 8-10, 2012, at the Calhoun Stockyard on Hwy. 53 near Calhoun, Georgia.

The cost is \$350 per person. If you plan to attend, please mail your \$150 deposit to Southeast Select Sires, Inc., 3789 Old Port Royal Road, Spring Hill, Tennessee 37174. The deadline for this application is September 30, 2012.

The training course will consist of classroom sessions and lab sessions on live cattle. The contents of the training course include - Anatomy and Physiology, AI Technique, Semen Handling, Heat Detection, and Estrus Synchronization.

CONTACT MIKE BAILEY: 404-353-7497 OR mfleet56@yahoo.com



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Letter from your President

Greetings!

I hope each of you are getting some of these spotty showers that are popping up around the state, like here in West Georgia. We were getting extremely dry, so every little bit helps.

I would like to thank all of the committee members for the Southern National for another successful event. They do a lot of behind the scenes work that never gets noticed to make this the success that it is. Also congratulations to all the exhibitors and winners.

We have a good contingent of juniors and family members who are at the National Junior Angus Show in Louisville, Kentucky. Between the shows and all of the contests, they will have a fun filled and very busy week. Good Luck! If you have never been to a NJAS you should try to attend one sometime. The AAA, the sponsoring states and the family members do an outstanding job in pulling off a major event every twelve months in support of these junior members. It is really something to see.

All of the spring and early summer sales have been very good. Congrats to our members that had sales with such strong offerings. Georgia is truly an Angus state.

Mike McCravy



Georgia Angus royalty presented awards during the Southern National Angus Show. Pictured from left are Abbey Gretsch and Shelby Eidson.

Angus breeder needed for cattle display

In conjunction with the American Angus Association, the GAA will have an Angus booth and live cattle display during the Sunbelt Ag Exposition October 16-18. The GAA is seeking an Angus farm to assist in displaying their high quality Angus cattle during this year's expo. The Sunbelt Ag Expo is an agricultural-based trade show held at Spence Field in Moultrie, Ga. Known as "North America's Premier Farm Show"™ the annual event has more than 1200 exhibitors showcasing the latest in farming technology. If you are interested in being a part of the Angus display at this year's event, please contact Andrew McPeake at 478/719-7021.

Do you want to advertise in the GAA Cow Chips?

Advertising space is available in the September/October Cow Chips:

Advertising Rates:

Full Page - \$100 1/2 Page - \$75 1/4 Page - \$50 Business Card - \$25

NEW: Classified Ads Free for GAA and GJAA Members. Send 25 words or less and contact information

**Advertising Deadline: August 20, 2012
Submit all ads to info@georgiaangus.org**

Older vs. better cows: Age may not trump herd improvement

By Miranda Reiman, *Certified Angus Beef*

“More longevity and fertility in the cowherd seem like a “no brainer.” But when those pursuits come at the expense of uniformity or other functionality, it could pay to do some hard studying.

“The overwhelming cost and subsequent priority of cow-calf operations is related to cow maintenance and care,” says Nevil Speer, an animal scientist at Western Kentucky University. “The difference is huge between a cow that lasts until she is 10 versus 8.”

That’s why crossbreeding is the default, blanket prescription for commercial cattlemen looking to make reproductive improvements.

But South Dakota rancher Rich Blair says, “Been there, done that, and don’t want to go back.”

He and his brother Ed turned their once-straightbred Herefords into Continental crossbreds in the late 1970s and ’80s, but gradually phased that out in the ’90s when the family turned its focus to Angus.

“We always calved out quite a few first-calf heifers and you’d lose or cull 25% of those for one thing or another: disposition, udders, no milk, mothering ability,” he says. “Now we’re closer to 2% and we have a lot more consistency in our heifers.” He gives most of the credit to the breed association’s extensive database and the use of high-accuracy sires.

Heartland Cattle Company, near McCook, Neb., custom develops heifers for a large number of commercial Angus herds, and also sells bred heifers by forward contract. Many long-term heifer buyers say they want that hybrid vigor in black baldies, but those have been hard to come by.

Comparing the two sets of females, research and information director Janet Rippe says they’re fairly similar.

“Our first service conception rate averages 71% and then after a 45-day AI season, we’ll send heifers out of here at about 91% to 92% percent pregnant,” she says. “If you get a true hybrid or an F1-cross or even just a quarter something else, those cattle are generally more fertile. But we might not see as much difference in the numbers because our long-term Angus customers have put so much selection pressure on fertility.”

All are subject to pre-breeding inspections that include pelvic measurements and reproductive tract scores, and outliers exit the program then. Customers may opt to market “recommended culls” that fall out for things like disposition, too.

“What’s left should be pretty functional,” Rippe says.

Regardless of who is growing the replacements, all cattlemen have their initial priorities. According to USDA data, 62% of ranches sold cows for reasons other than just being open. Studies point to some of those reasons.

“The 2010 BEEF survey reveals that disposition, birth weight, hoof and leg soundness all ranked above weaning weight and yearling weight in terms of genetic prioritization among commercial producers,” Speer says. “In other words, time savings has more value than additional weight or production.”

Blair now relies on expected progeny differences (EPDs) within the breed because, he says, “I don’t have

time to deal with calving problems.

“Hard births cause a multitude of problems,” he says. “It isn’t just if that heifer had a hard time and you had to pull that calf, but now you wonder if she’s going to breed back and if that calf is going to be healthy.”

On the other hand, in a large herd with focused management, predictably shorter gestation periods from high-accuracy EPD bulls can allow a couple more weeks for heifers to breed back, Blair says.

Although no producer invites challenges, Speer says the issues become increasingly important as herds get larger.

“I have an additional benefit from heterosis, but if it costs me something in terms of functionality of traits, such as calving ease, I don’t want to have to deal with those problems,” he says. “That risk/reward becomes somewhat different when you put all of those factors in together.”

Everybody seems to agree that it’s a hard area to quantify.

“With fertility there are so many factors: was it weather, was it the technician, was it the bull, was it the sire line that came into it?” Rippe says, “It’s pretty hard to get good enough data when you’re looking at fertility.”

Adding in longevity multiplies that difficulty.

“It’s a lot more complex than just reproduction,” Speer says. “Why else did she leave the herd? A bad eye, a structural soundness problem, disposition or all those other things you can readily select for?”

Those who are making steady progress in any number of traits may not place as much importance on longevity because of the reduced opportunity to make genetic change.

Blair remembers a particular bull they used a decade ago with a then-impressive Angus EPD of .4 for intramuscular fat (IMF). “That was really out there in 2000, and one of the big reasons I used him was for that number,” he says. “Now you can find hundreds of bulls that are .4 IMF.” In fact, that’s about breed average today.

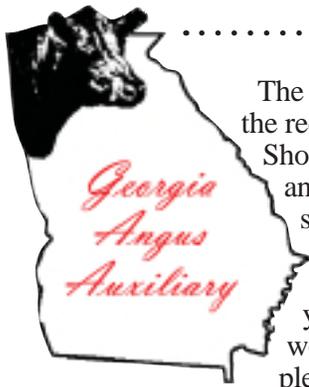
Longevity in outstanding individuals helps a program but across the herd, it may not be the highest calling. “If you’re not turning that cowherd over, it’s really hard to get much genetic improvement in your calves,” Blair says.

The Blairs have been using all Angus since feedlot performance data showed them the top end of those calves kept up with the top end of their Charolais calves. Figuring in maternal traits and labor savings, it was starting to look like another kind of “no brainer.” The deal clincher showed up when calves sold on the grid and they saw more than a \$200 spread in value.

“That was too much money to be giving away, so we wanted to move the bottom end up,” he says.

Some Blair loads have hit 50% Prime, selling for \$200 above average Kansas price for the U.S. Premium Beef grid for the week.

“Everybody looks for the silver bullet, the quick fix, with no time for a long-range plan,” Blair suggests. “If that’s your attitude then heterosis is the quick way to get there. But if you really want to build something sustainable over a long period of time, you can find the data within one breed and design the cow to be exactly what you want her to be.”



The Auxiliary was very busy during the recent Southern National Angus Show. We unveiled our much anticipated cookbook and sponsored several contests for the exhibitors. The cookbooks look amazing and are on sale for \$10. If you'd like to purchase one, or would like to help us with sales, please let Holly Alford, Jan Scott or myself know. This year the Auxiliary

sponsored contests in the areas of Photography, Poster, T-Shirt Design, Graphic Design and Quiz Bowl. We were excited about the increase in participants this year and would like to encourage the juniors who didn't enter to get involved next year.

The Auxiliary hosted a reception and held our annual meeting on Friday, June 8, 2012. We had a tremendous turnout at the reception with about 150 people in attendance. Thank you so much to everyone who helped by providing food, setting up or cleaning up afterwards. It was wonderful to have the event in the Roquemore Building and I'd like to once again thank the Georgia Angus Association for covering the facilities cost. Your support of the Auxiliary is very much appreciated. Winners of the various contests were announced during the reception and I'd like to congratulate everyone on a job well done. A complete list of winners can be found in the newsletter.

The annual meeting of the Georgia Angus Auxiliary was conducted immediately following the reception.

Jan Scott has accepted the role as Chair of our Fundraising Committee and we are very thankful for her willingness to serve! The Nominating Committee recommended the current slate of officers for another 2-year term. The recommendation was voted on and approved. Melissa Miller will serve as Vice President, Holly Alford Secretary/Treasurer and I will continue as President. On behalf of my fellow officers, thank you for faith in us. We look forward to working with you.

Good luck and safe travels to all the juniors who will be competing at the NJAS!

Tanya Eidson



Tanya Eidson, President



Sandra McPeake and Tammy Williams assisted with selling the new Auxiliary cookbooks during the Southern National.

Georgia Angus Auxiliary Contest Winners

Photography Contest Winners

Novice

Landscape (Overall Winner) - Savannah Page, Jefferson
 Angus Cattle - Savannah Page, Jefferson
 People - Savannah Page, Jefferson
 Around the Farm - Savannah Page, Jefferson

Junior

Landscape (Overall Winner) - Daniel Williams, Milan
 Angus Cattle - Daniel Williams, Milan
 People - Garrett Smith, Douglas
 Around the Farm - Garrett Smith, Douglas

Intermediate

Landscape - (Overall Winner) Drew Williams, Milan
 Angus Cattle - Abbey Gretsche, Crawford
 People - Haley Throne, Lexington
 Around the Farm - Drew Williams, Milan

Senior

Landscape - Heather Cabe, Carnesville
 Angus Cattle - Heather Cabe, Carnesville
 People - Heather Cabe, Carnesville
 Around the Farm (Overall Winner) - Heather Cabe, Carnesville
 Enhanced - Heather Cabe, Carnesville

Adult

Landscape - John Bramblett, Elberton
 Angus Cattle - John Bramblett, Elberton
 People - John Bramblett, Elberton
 Around the Farm - John Bramblett, Elberton

T-Shirt Design

Junior - Daniel Williams, Milan
 Intermediate - Abbey Gretsche, Crawford
 Senior (Overall Winner) - Heather Cabe, Carnesville

Quiz Bowl

Junior - Daniel Williams, Milan
 Intermediate - Abbey Gretsche, Crawford
 Senior - Heather Cabe, Carnesville

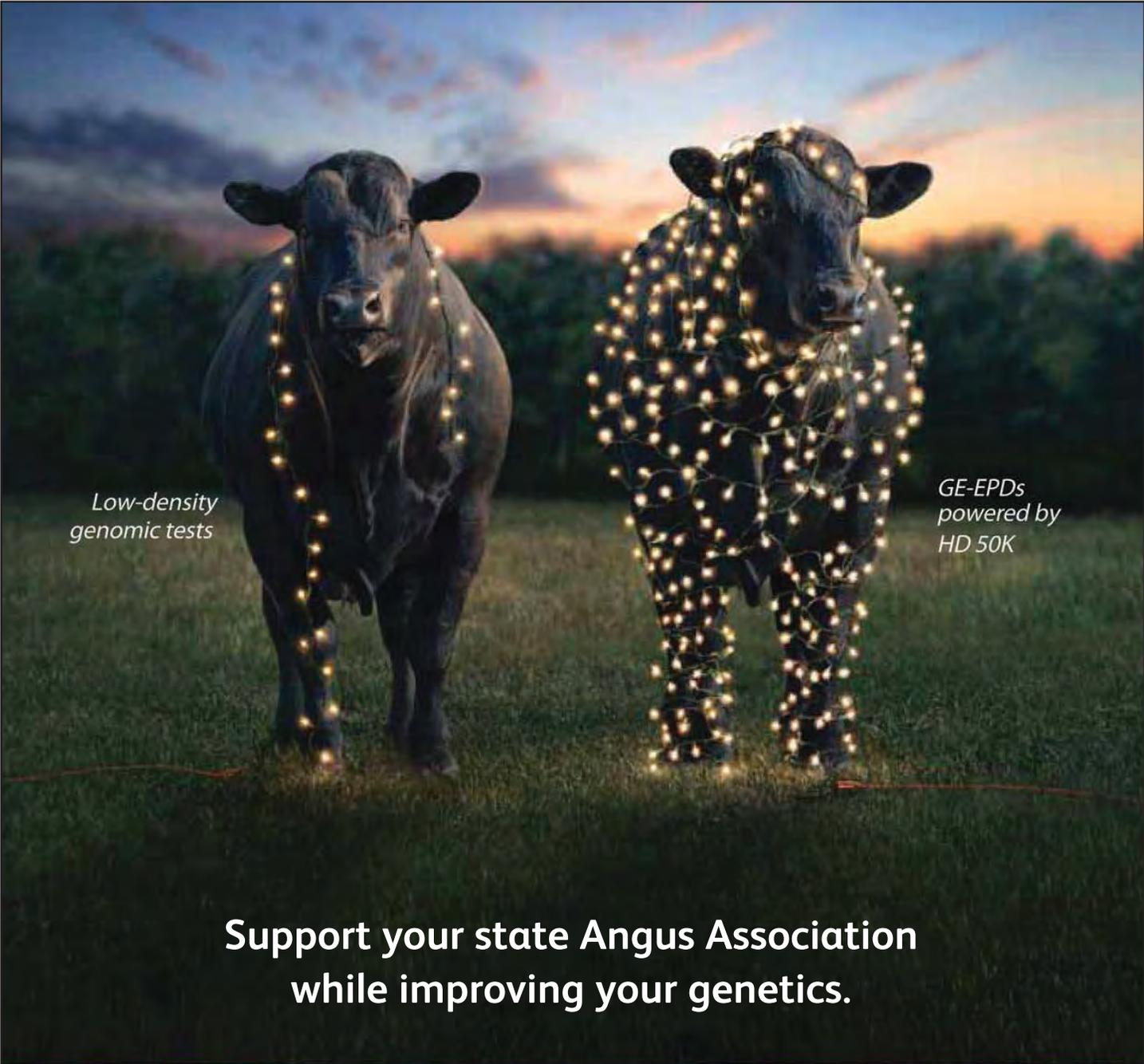
Graphic Design

Senior - Heather Cabe, Carnesville

Poster Contest

Novice

Membership Recruitment - Savannah Page, Jefferson
 Herd Advertisement - Savannah Page, Jefferson
 Breed/Association Promotion - Savannah Page, Jefferson



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or Angus representative, or go to www.angus.org.**

TERMS: Promotion period is from June 1 through August 31, 2012. Funds are intended to go toward marketing,
education or junior programs. Cannot be combined with any other promotion.

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GE-EPDs Powered by HD 50K

Southern National Junior Angus Show

June 8, 2012 • Perry, GA • Judge: Bruce Stertzback - Louisville, OH



Dameron Countess 1134 won grand champion owned female. Logan Steed, Carrollton, Ga., owns the September 2011 daughter of S A V Net Worth 4200. She first claimed calf champion.



Uhf Blackcap May 1111 won grand champion bred-and-owned female. Preston Nichols, Graceville, Fla., owns the September 2011 daughter of S A V Bismarck 8757.



Cedar Creek 5682 1201 won grand champion bred-and-owned bull. Teddi Steadman, Greenwood, S.C., owns the January 2012 son of S A V Bismarck 5682.



MS In Focus won grand champion steer. Jared Cook, Ty Ty, Ga., owns the September 2011 son of JLM IN Focus 7102.



Dameron Bardot 025 won grand champion cow-calf pair. Teddi Steadman, Greenwood, S.C., owns the January 2010 daughter of PVF ALL PAYDAY 729. A February 2012 heifer calf sired by Dameron Legend 0154 completes the winning pair.



These junior members won top showmanship honors in their division. Pictured from left are Clayton McGuire, Waverly, Ala., senior champion; Logan Steed, Carrollton, Ga., intermediate champion; and Baylee Steed, Carrollton, Ga., junior champion.



Gambles Shadoe 6021 won reserve grand champion owned female. Breann Steadman, Greenwood, S.C., owns the June 2011 daughter of B C Lookout 7024. She first claimed intermediate champion.



Heathers improvement 1675 won reserve grand champion bred-and-owned female. Kellie Panter, Dahlonga, Ga., owns the January 2012 daughter of BV Net Worth 8013.



Cedar Creek 826T 1101 won reserve grand champion bred-and-owned bull. Teddi Steadman, Greenwood, S.C., owns the January 2011 son of O C C Terrian 826T.



Turnpike Tenderloin 1027 won reserve grand champion steer. Drew Williams, Milan, Ga., owns the February 2011 son of Turnpike Tenderloin 6024.



Pine Ridge Blackcap N361 won reserve grand champion cow-calf pair. Cody Alvarez, Dade City, Fla., owns the September 2008 daughter of Mytty In Focus. A December 2011 heifer calf sired by S A V Bismarck 5682 is at side.



These young Angus enthusiasts won peewee showmanship honors. Pictured from left are Haley Minert, Jacksonville, Fla.; Hank Throne, Lexington, Ga.; and Hannah Williams, Milan, Ga.

Southern National Open Angus Show

June 9, 2012 • Perry, GA • Judge: John McCurry - Burton, KS



"The Biggest Little Show in the South"

Gambles SS Shadoe 9010 won supreme champion and grand champion female. Breann Steadman, Greenwood, S.C., owns the September 2010 daughter of B C Lookout 7024. She earlier won senior champion.



Gambles Hailstorm won grand champion bull. Holly Gamble, Clinton, Tenn., and Sydney Schnoor, Chowchilla, Calif., own the March 2011 son of B C Lookout 7024. He first won junior champion.



Werner Rachel 0073 won grand champion cow-calf pair. Wayne Banner, Eagleville, Tenn.; Michael Banner, Spring Hill, Tenn.; and Werner Angus, Cordova, Ill., own the January 2010 daughter of TC Grid Topper 355. A February 2012 heifer calf sired by Kesslers Front Range 7520 completes the winning pair.



E/T Blackcap 154 won reserve grand champion female. Samantha Allen, Talmo, Ga., owns the October 2011 daughter of S A V Momentum 9274. She first claimed calf champion.



These junior members qualified to represent Georgia at the National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest held in conjunction with the National Junior Angus Show this July in Louisville, Ky. Pictured from left are Bruce Stertzbach, judge; Taylor Gazda, Athens, representative; and Katherine Throne, Lexington, representative.



KCS Lookout Shine 13 won reserve grand champion bull at the 2012 Southern National Angus Show, June 9 in Perry, Ga. K.C. Smith, Douglas, Ga., owns the September 2011 son of B C Lookout 7024. He first won calf champion.



Cedar Creek Foreverlady 2803 won reserve grand champion cow-calf pair at the 2012 Southern National Angus Show, June 9 in Perry, Ga. Teddi Steadman, Greenwood, S.C., owns the February 2008 daughter of S A V 8180 Traveler 004. A January 2012 bull calf sired by S A V Bismarck 5682 is at side.

Thank You to all the 2012 Southern National Angus Show Sponsors

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T&W Angus
Throne Stock Farm
Triple D Angus Farm
Turnpike Creek Farms
Wiregrass Cattle Co.

The Junior Corner - News from the Georgia Junior Angus Association

Hey y'all! I hope everybody is staying cool and enjoying the summer! I am honored to serve as your 2012-2013 Georgia Junior Angus Association President and look forward to working with the new officers and directors. There are exciting opportunities coming up and I hope Georgia will be well-represented.

The National Junior Angus Show is taking place in Louisville, Kentucky July 15-21. Good luck to the GJAA members who will be making the trip to exhibit cattle and compete in the various contests. Taylor Gazda and Katherine Throne will be Georgia's representatives in Showmanship and I know they will both do a great job. Good luck also to Katherine

Throne as she runs for the NJAA Board of Directors.

The next big event coming up is LEAD in Fort Collins, Colorado August 2-5. I'd like to encourage anyone who hasn't attended this exciting conference to consider going.

Have a great summer,

Shelby Eidson
GJAA President



Williams earns NJAA Awards

Drew Williams, Milan, Ga., left, received the Bronze and Silver Awards at the 2012 Southern National Junior Angus Show, June 8 in Perry, Ga. The Bronze and Silver Awards are the first two levels of the National Junior Angus Association Recognition Program. Juniors must apply for the awards and then meet point requirements in many areas of participation before receiving them. Clay Williams, National Junior Angus Association chairman is pictured presenting the awards.

GJAA elects new officers and directors



These young men and woman were selected to serve on the Georgia Junior Angus Association board of directors and are pictured at the 2012 Southern National Junior Angus Show, June 8 in Perry, Ga. Pictured front row from left are Macy Seagraves, Nicholson; Samantha Allen, Talmo; Katherine Throne, Lexington, historian; Drew Williams, Milan, vice president; and Abbey Gretsch, Crawford, secretary. Back row from left are Logan Steed, Carrollton; Kellie Panter, Dahlonga; Anna Scott, Douglas; and Shelby Eidson, Arnoldsville, president. Not pictured is Haley Throne, treasurer.

Quest For Excellence Angus Sale

Mike Gillispie Farms Annual Production Sale

Saturday • Noon

September 15, 2012

Held at the Farm - Dobson, North Carolina



Gillispie Sarah W-1

Sire: GAR Predestined
 Dam: YON Sarah S260
 MGS: GAR Retail Product
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YON Sarah S260

\$21,000 Dam of Gillispie Sarah W-1.



Coleman Donna 386

Stems from same family as Fink Donna 6603 2525 BW.



Fink Donna 6603 2525 BW

Sire: BCC Bushwacker 41-93
 Dam: Finks Donna 2525 907 5175
 MGS: SAF 598 Bando 5175
 Sells safe in calf to Basin Payweight 1075.

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GAA Board Minutes

The GAA board of directors met Friday, June 8, 2012 at the Southern National Angus Show in Perry, Ga.
The following highlights the information that was discussed.

The Banquet Committee asked for suggestions for any special speaker or workshops to be held before or during the banquet.

The Junior Activities Committee is working to get juniors ready for the National Junior Angus Show and its activities. New GJAA officers and directory were recently elected.

The Membership Committee reported that membership was down in the association. The board discussed ideas to increase membership numbers and other ideas to provide additional services to its current members.

The Resources Committee reported the 2012-13 GAA membership directory was completed. The association

generated approximately \$12,000 from this project. Directories would be mailed to members in the coming weeks.

The Southern National Angus Show Committee thanked all of this year's sponsors and volunteers. Approximately 80 head had shown up for the show.

The Georgia Angus Auxiliary would hold their reception and annual meeting that evening. They offered numerous contests at this year's show. Additionally, they were offering their first fundraising project for sale - cookbooks.

Sale Report

- Bridges Angus Farm - 51 Lots Grossed \$246,900 and Averaged \$4,841

Sympathy

- Mr. Ed Tolbert, age 66, of Nicholson, Georgia, died Thursday, July 12, 2012, at his residence. Mr. Tolbert was born in Commerce to the late Joe Ed and Woodie Jackson Tolbert. He was a member of Antioch United Methodist Church and was an United States Army Veteran of Vietnam. Mr. Tolbert was a lifelong supporter of 4-H and FFA. He was also a former member of the Jackson County Schools Board of Education. Mr. Tolbert is survived by his wife, Delia Brown Tolbert of Nicholson; sons, Jay Hailey Tolbert (Crystal) of Nicholson, Will Tolbert of Nicholson and Alex Tolbert of Frankfort, KY; brother, Gene Tolbert of Nicholson; sisters, Beulah Smith of Nicholson, Joann Johnson of Morrow and Wanda Stowe of Lakeland, FL; and one grandson, Titus Charles Tolbert. Donations may be made to the East Jackson Alumni Association for Ag Facility, c/o Marty Seagraves, 7276 Hwy. 334, Nicholson, GA 30565.

Congratulations

- John Starnes and Randa Owens who were united in marriage on June 16. John is the son of GAA members Roland and Janet Starnes of Woodbury.

GAA sponsors Angus breed show at Georgia Junior Beef Futurity



Congratulations to Logan Steed, Carrollton, for exhibiting the grand champion Angus heifer.



Macy Seagraves, Maysville, exhibited the reserve grand champion Angus heifer.

different in terms of outcome and how you needed to manage them.”

Geneticist Bob Weaber, Kansas State University, says that’s partly because what works on average for the whole calf crop varies among individuals. That may shift the balance of traits toward one breed or the other.

“Even though the F2s [composite progeny] have half of their genetic material from each breed on average, some re-pairing of chromosomes from the same breed occurs,” he says. “When we make an F2 we see a decrease in heterosis, because on average one-half of the animals’ chromosomes consist of pairings from the same breed of founder.”

Data from the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (MARC) suggests that the progeny from matings of F1 parents are no more variable than either of their purebred founder breeds for traits like weaning weight or yearling weight. However, for traits controlled by a single gene, these progeny are noticeably less consistent than the F1 parents, especially if the founder breeders were very divergent, Weaber says.

Speer says that makes it hard to measure how much productivity they should add to the herd: “In many instances composite bulls actually represent backcrossing and may reduce heterosis potential versus using a breed that serves as a total outcross.”

From a seedstock producer’s perspective, it can be much more difficult to create a reliable composite compared to a purebred bull.

“I have 27 years of objective breeding decisions that harness the power of the AAA [American Angus Association] database,” says Brian McCulloh, Viroqua, Wis. The registered breeder, who makes 350 of those decisions each spring, says the predictive power is strengthened by the broad use of artificial insemination (AI) by Association members, who submit within-herd data that ties all animals together.

“Simply put, I am not comfortable ‘experimenting’ with data from other breeds to create a composite bull for our commercial customers. I have more confidence predicting the outcome of our pure line Angus bulls,” he says.

The Angus database updates weekly with more

than 20 million performance measures and 17 million pedigrees. That data volume explains why, after dabbling in the composite market to try offering customers an outcross, McCulloh abruptly stopped.

Using the MARC across-breed EPD (expected progeny difference) adjustment factors help in comparing data, Callahan says. “But there is still a little bit of an unknown as to where that animal is going to come out.

“The purebred cattle evaluations give you better insight in terms of predictability of individuals and their offspring,” he says. Genomically-enhanced EPDs hone that ability. “You can make more progress – because you have greater access to performance information – than you can in most crossbreeding operations, unless they’re extremely well designed.”

To date, the DNA technology can only effectively sort out straightbred populations, he adds.

“That precludes it from being useful in composites and crossbreds,” Callahan says.

When selecting hybrids, commercial producers may face another challenge: “There’s an increasing need to purchase bulls in volume that provide both uniformity of calf crop and deliver on the various traits of interest,” Speer says. “Commercial bull buyers have access to larger sale offerings when shopping for Angus bulls compared to other breeds.”

Purchasing siblings in bulk is routine.

“That opportunity doesn’t exist when considering composite bulls,” he says.

Callahan doesn’t dispute the advantages of genetic diversity, but says he’s concerned with those who are “crossbreeding just for the sake of crossbreeding.”

His typical composite customer is in a terminal program, purchasing rather than raising replacement heifers. Otherwise, many have switched back to straightbreds.

“They really enjoy the uniformity of their calf crop and the predictability in their genetics,” he says.

There are no shortcuts to that.

Calendar of Events

September 2012

17 Gwinnett County Fair Angus Show -
Lawrenceville

October 2012

6 Georgia Nat'l Fair Jr. Angus Show - Perry
16-18 Sunbelt Ag Expo - Moultrie
18 Lemmon Cattle Ent. - Woodbury
29 Hill-View Farm - Blairsville

November 2012

2 Bull Power - Colbert
30 Davis Farms PT Bull & Female Sale - Doerun

December 2012

1 Bramblett Angus PT Bull & Female Sale -
Elberton
7 Calhoun PT Bull Sale - Calhoun

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