



# AR ROUNDUP

**January  
2024**

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**Inside This Issue:**  
**Beef Showcase  
Special Edition**

Farm & ranch monthly magazine published by The Roundup  
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# Prewitt & Company & Sidney Livestock Cattle Marketing Headquarters

Prewitt & Company LLC has been the area's cattle marketing headquarters since 1996. The company has been involved in all avenues of the cattle industry including cattle buying, selling, and relocating. "We buy and sell cattle all over. We buy cattle off a lot of ranches in Montana and North Dakota and relocate them to feedlots in the Midwest," said Tim Larson, Prewitt & Company cattle buyer/seller and Sidney Livestock manager.

The company also feeds their own cattle at feedlots throughout Colorado and the Midwest. Their customer base includes producers and feedlots from California to Minnesota and 11 buyers covering Montana, North Dakota, Wyoming and Idaho. "Our goal is to build relationships with the rancher - make both ends meet - we want everyone to find the best market and best value for their cattle," added Tim. The company also produces cattle by leasing acreage for a cow/calf/yearling operation.

Tim has been working for Prewitt & Company since its inception. He said, "I was raised in it. My dad bought cattle for Rod during my teenage years, so I was exposed to it and traveled with him and helped him. So after a couple of years of college, I came back and have been here ever since."

In August 2012, Prewitt & Company purchased Yellowstone Livestock and

renamed it Sidney Livestock Market Center. Since this time, there have been many upgrades and changes to the sale barn. "We have been working hard to grow a competitive marketplace - we have improved the yard so that the cattle are handled in a very cattle friendly way. We have also had to adjust some of our sale dates just to accommodate those numbers. For example, we have cattle sales every Wednesday, and then from the last Saturday of October to the first Saturday in December we have Saturday sales every week," stated Prewitt & Company marketing and advertising specialist Kristin Larson.

Kristin explained that a good-working sale barn is an important part of the vitality of the community. The Sidney Livestock sale barn has been serving ranchers from all over the MonDak region for many years. "We strive to produce a safe and healthy environment for cattle and for our youth to grow up in it and experience this business and this industry," added Tim.

For more information on Prewitt & Company and Sidney Livestock, visit [www.prewittandco.com](http://www.prewittandco.com) and [sidneylivestock.com](http://sidneylivestock.com).



Sidney Livestock Market Center. (Photo submitted)

## Save the Date for the 11th Annual Cattlemen's Ball

By Dianne Swanson

The premiere event of the winter, the Cattlemen's Ball, will be held on Feb. 10 at the Richland County Event Center, Sidney. Dust off your boots and join us for this fun event, open to the whole community. The evening will feature a steak dinner, a wide array of live auction items and music by the band "Fast Forward" which plays all kinds of music.

The goal of the event has always been to showcase the beef industry and the role it and all of agriculture plays in Richland County. Proceeds this year will go to Getting Local Beef in the Sidney schools.

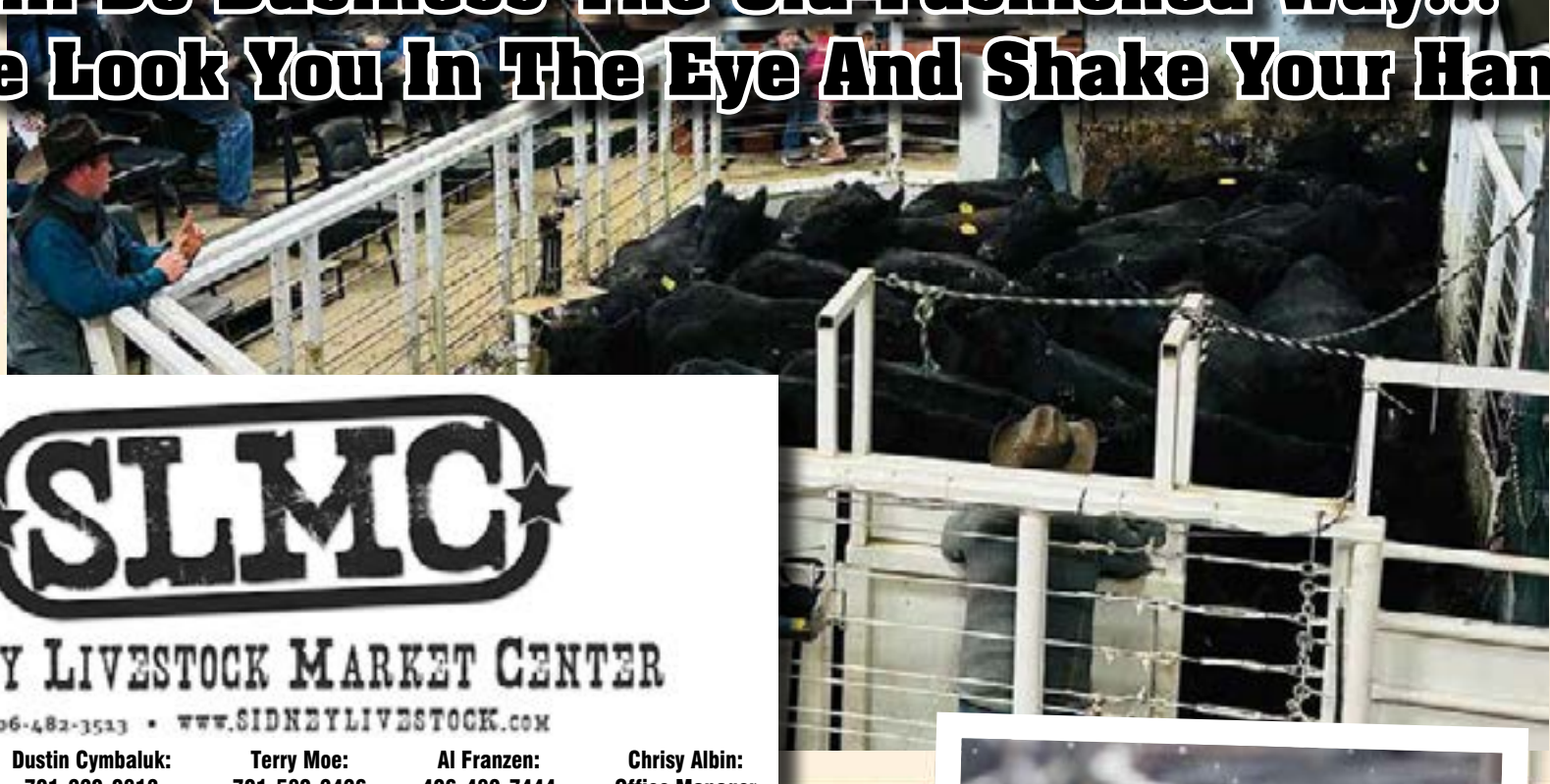
Social will start at 5 p.m., dinner is at 6 p.m. and the live auction starts at 7 p.m. Dance the night away from 8 p.m. until midnight.

Tickets are available at Stockman Bank and Prewitt & Company for \$50 each.

If you would like to be a sponsor of this event please call Kristin Larson at 406-480-5139.



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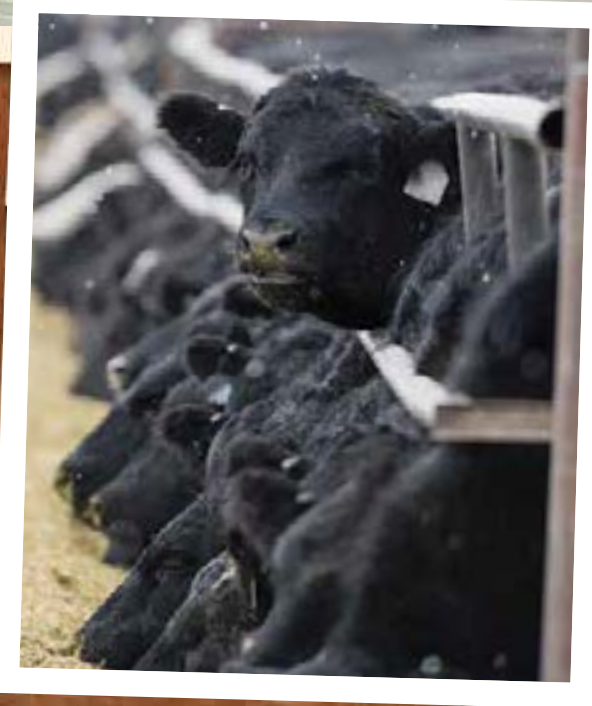
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**SALE SCHEDULE**

Wed, Jan 3rd ..... All Class Cattle Sale - 9:00  
 Wed, Jan 10th ..... All Class Cattle Sale - 9:00  
 Wed, Jan 17th ..... Feeder Special & Bred Cow Sale - 9:00  
 Wed, Jan 24th ..... All Class Cattle Sale - 9:00  
 Wed, Jan 31st ..... Feeder Special & Replacement Heifer Special - 9:00  
 Wed, Feb 7th ..... All Class Cattle Sale - 9:00  
 Wed, Feb 14th ..... Feeder Special & Bred Cow Sale - 9:00  
 Wed, Feb 21th ..... All Class Cattle Sale - 9:00  
 Wed, Feb 28th ..... All Class Cattle Sale - 9:00  
 Wed, Mar 6th ..... All Class Cattle Sale - 9:00  
 Wed, Mar 13th ..... All Class Cattle Sale - 9:00  
 Wed, Mar 20th ..... All Class Cattle Sale - 9:00  
 Wed, Mar 27th ..... All Class Cattle Sale - 9:00



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# Best Angus & Quarter Horses



Vawnita, Kyle and Pete Best. (Photo submitted)

## Submitted by Vawnita Best, Best Angus & Quarter Horses

Best Angus will be hosting their 10th Annual Best Angus & Quarter Horses Production Sale at 2 p.m., Monday, March 4, at the ranch, southeast of Watford City. The sale will offer 75-registered yearling Angus bulls and 15 coming two-year-old registered Angus bulls and excellent home raised heifer calves. For more information, visit the ranch website, <http://www.bestangusandquarterhorses.com>.

What started in 1987 as a 4-H and FFA project of Pete's has grown into a registered Angus cowherd known for efficient, profitable, maternal cattle that serve the cattlemen of today's beef industry well.

In 2006, Bests had the opportunity to move themselves and their 30-registered Angus cows home to the ranch that Vawnita grew up on in the Badlands of south central McKenzie County. Through intense AI and ET, the entire brood cowherd at Elkhorn Creek Ranch is registered, AHIR tested, Maternal Plus enrolled, and carcass ultra-sounded since 1995. Of the 300 cows, approximately half are synchronized in the spring and AI'ed and about 100 are used as recipient cows in the ET program.

Best Angus believes it is their responsibility to breed cattle that will provide profitability for their customers' cowherds, as well as their quality of life through focusing on economic and problem free trait selection that is balanced with nature.

To be able to do so, selection pressure is applied in their harsh Badland's environment. Bests have extended their grazing season over the last decade and have focused on the type and kind of mother cow who thrives in a harsh environment, while producing calves that efficiently gain in the feedlot, and grade on the rail.

In addition to their Best Angus & Quarter Horses Production Sale the first Monday of March at the ranch, Best Angus has also partnered with Strommen Ranch and Talkington Angus Ranch to form the Badlands Angus Alliance registered coming two-year-old bull and bred female sale.

The Badlands Angus Alliance on the first Wednesday of December offered registered Angus coming two-year-old bulls from the three programs and bred females from customers of Badlands Angus Alliance. Badlands Angus Alliance will be supporting Best customers with a Badland's Angus Alliance Replacement Heifer Calf Special, Jan. 25, 2024. "We see this new sale as an ideal way for our customers to add value for their maternal genetics and a great way for new customers and heifer development projects to buy into the Badlands Angus Alliance Bred female sale," stated Pete Best.

For more information on Best Angus and Quarter Horses or Badlands Angus Alliance, contact Pete at 701-570-6959 or visit <http://www.bestangusandquarterhorses.com>.

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- ❖ We provide free bull keep until April, along with a free breeding soundness exam and free delivery, for the first 500 miles on purchases over \$5,000.
- ❖ Every bull walks through the sale ring enabling you to see what you are buying. Some pictures and videos just don’t represent cattle as they should.

Raising cattle that work for the cow-calf producer, the feeder, and the packer, while providing an enjoyable eating experience for the consumer should be every cattle producer’s goal. Ranchers work hard and should expect their cattle to do the same. There are no shortcuts with today’s high inputs; your cattle have to be profitable and efficient. Blending EPD and genomic traits requires discipline, common sense, and patience. It doesn’t matter how impressive the EPD are or the size of calf at weaning. Cattle that lack efficiency and require extra labor and costly inputs are not desirable. This is why common sense and an experienced eye still play a major role in every breeding decision we make.

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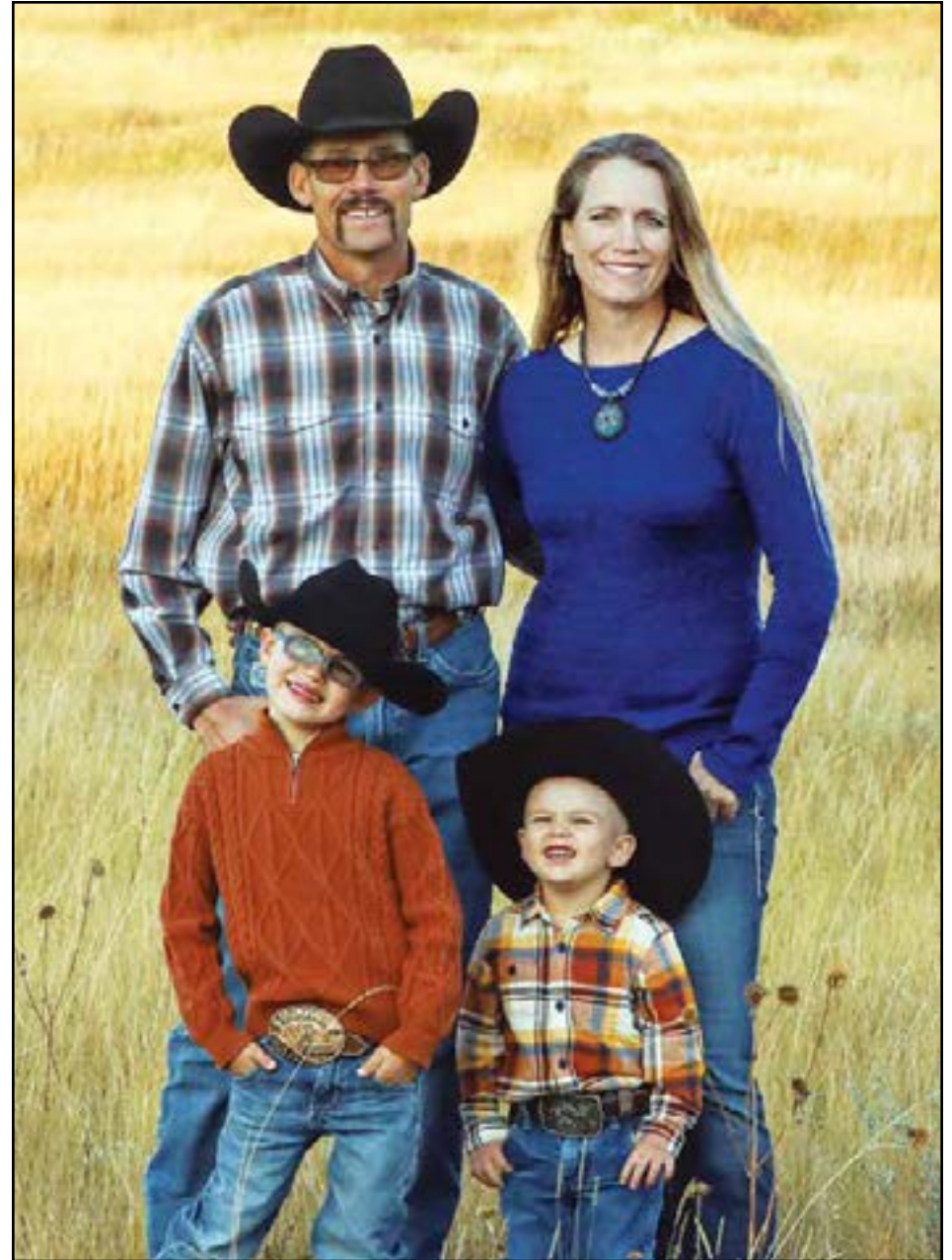
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[beggersdiamondvranch.com](http://beggersdiamondvranch.com)

# Leland Red Angus



Luella & Melvin Leland with grandsons, Tripp & Trey. (Photo submitted)



Todd & Carla, Trey & Tripp Leland. (Photo submitted)

## Submitted by Carla Leland, Leland Red Angus

Leland Red Angus will be hosting their 41st annual production sale on Friday, March 8, at the ranch located in SW McKenzie County, 35 miles SE of Sidney in the Squaw Gap Community. The ranch, which has raised registered Red Angus for over 50 years, is operated by Melvin and Luella Leland and their son and daughter-in-law Todd and Carla Leland. Homesteaded in 1911 by Melvin's father, Leland Red Angus breeds over 425 registered Red Angus females per year and will market 180 bulls and 35 yearling heifers, including about 60 fall-born, 18-month-old bulls from daughter Tracey Koester and her family in Steele, ND. They also offer bred females by private treaty every fall.

The ranch operates on a combination of deeded, leased, and permitted National Grasslands land and is regularly involved in national, state-wide, and local

breed and beef industry organizations. Though the cowherd is managed on the range year-round, the sale bulls are developed in the ranch feedlot, with most of the feed being produced on 1200 acres of hay and cropland.

The Lelands utilize the breed's top genetics. "Much of the herd is bred by artificial insemination and features genomic verification by DNA and ultrasound testing for economically relevant traits and carcass values, a service provided by our son-in-law Dr. J.J. Hovde," commented Melvin, noting that they use as much technology as is applicable. "We are dedicated to the values of rural and family lifestyle, and the 113-year legacy of the ranch is expected to continue with Todd, Carla, and their sons, Trey and Tripp, continuing as the fourth generation of Leland ownership." For more information, call 701-565-2347.

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# Sandhill Red Angus

Andrew and McKenzie Johnson have been raising registered Red Angus in Northeastern Montana since 2006. Andrew's father, Floyd, had a registered Angus herd and when Andrew was able to attain some red cows from his father, they were able to begin raising Registered Red Angus near Froid, MT.

The Johnsons focus on producing strong maternal females and believe that's what makes them successful. Every year, they look to buy customers' heifer calves back to breed them. They breed around 1000 heifers every year. Some go back

into the commercial herd, and some are sold as bred heifers and pairs.

Females at Sandhill Red Angus are bred and raised to be hard working cows. The cows are in an open pasture, calve on their own with no assistance and run like a commercial ranch. They believe the registered females should be able to calve on their own, get their calf up and get them going. The Montana conditions are brutal at times, but their cows strive to birth hardy calves with vigor, that natural instinct to get up and go.

Sandhill Red Angus's Annual Production Sale will be held Tuesday, March 5 at Sidney Livestock Auction, featuring 80 Red Angus yearling bulls, and 100 bred heifers. Buy with confidence with a 1-year breeding guarantee on bulls. Bulls are delivered free in USA and Canada and fed free until April 1.



This calf had size and vigor or they may not have got to him in time before freezing.



Andrew getting birth weight.



(Back L-R) Andrew, Jayna and McKenzie Johnson. (Front L-R) Joslynn and Jett Johnson. (Photos submitted)



## Funk Named Director Of NDSU Williston Research Extension Center



Sam Funk is the NDSU Williston Research Extension Center new director. (NDSU photo)

### By NDSU Agriculture Communication

Sam Funk is an expert in farm and ranch management, agricultural policy and evaluation of on-farm technology adoption.

Funk will join North Dakota State University as director of the Williston Research Extension Center. He began his appointment on Dec. 18.

“Dr. Funk brings a wealth of experience and expertise in production economics to the center,” says Greg Lardy, NDSU Agricultural Affairs vice president. “He is a recognized expert in farm and ranch management, agricultural policy and evaluation of on-farm technology adoption.”

Prior to joining NDSU, Funk has served in significant roles with the United Soybean Board, Rabobank and the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation.

He looks forward to joining NDSU to continue bringing research-based information to northwest North Dakota and the broader region.

“I am excited about the mission we have to continue to expand opportunities for farmers, ranchers and other stakeholders in northwestern North Dakota and beyond,” says Funk. “The Williston Research Extension Center combines the efforts of outstanding researchers and staff while serving as a hub for Extension programs.”

The center will continue its role in improving crop varieties available to match cropping systems in the region. Foundation seedstock production and germplasm evaluation and improvement will remain key functions of the center.

“Collaborating with farmers, ranchers and stakeholders to address needs with applied research and economics is a professional calling,” adds Funk. “I look forward to working with my colleagues to develop Extension content with effective solutions.”



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# Bar JV Angus

The Bar JV Angus annual production sale will be held on Tuesday, March 28. They will be selling 100 commercial heifers and 100 bulls on location in their sale barn. Many of these bulls are out of their senior sire, Sitz Resilient, a complete herd sire that ranks in the top of the breed in multiple traits.

Visitors are always welcome to come to the ranch to view the bulls, heifers, or cows, and the family is happy to discuss any questions. They are also dedicated to finding the right bulls or heifers to match the needs of their customers.

Three generations of Vitts currently run the operation. Jim and Loretta Vitt founded the registered herd in the 1970s. In 2006, they were joined by Dale and Jill Vitt. Cody and Sierra Vitt became the third generation working on the ranch in 2017.

“This area has such a great legacy of agriculture and we feel blessed to be a part of it.”

The year 2023 marks 48 years of breeding quality Angus genetics at Bar JV. With nearly five decades in the business, the Vitt family’s vision has remained the same: to raise cattle that add value to your operation. Bar JV Angus is committed to breeding elite Angus females who produce high performance bulls, with the profitability of the commercial producer at the forefront.

Bar JV Angus emphasizes breeding bone, capacity, and length into their cattle, which enables them to handle the amount of growth that is found in today’s genetics. This ensures optimal pounds at weaning and will transmit to feedlot performance. Along with length of body, Bar JV Angus also looks for a long neck and smooth shoulders, which ensures calving ease. Calving ease goes far beyond birthweight; it has intentionally been bred into the cowherd.

Find Bar JV Angus on Facebook or visit <http://www.barjvangus.com> to learn more about our ranch, our herd, and our spring sale. The 2024 sale date is March 25.



Sitz Resilient. (Photos submitted)



Loretta and Jim Vitt



Dale and Jill Vitt Family: Kendal, Dale, Owen, Emily, Jill, Sierra, Brooks and Cody Vitt.

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We wish you all a happy and prosperous  
2024!



# Pleasant Valley Angus

**By Cory & Sarah Foss**

Pleasant Valley Angus is owned and operated by Cory and Sarah Foss, along with their kids, Addison and Hazen, and Cory's parents, Jerry and Judy.

Cory is the third generation to run cattle on the ranch, which headquarters six miles west of Sidney, MT, and summers their cattle on his grandfather's homestead in the Mona/Elmdale area.

Foss' started AI'ing extensively in the '90s on their commercial cattle. Cory and Sarah added registered females in 2008 and that portion of the herd has steadily grown since then. Last spring, we had the opportunity to add to our registered cows by purchasing the complete dispersion of the Severance Angus cow herd out of Ryder,



ND. We are excited about these new genetics and looking forward to how they will benefit our operation in the future.

Currently, we market a select group of yearling bulls and heifers in the spring. Our goal is to raise an elite set of females that produce powerful, functional, maternally-based cattle.

The cow herd is run on native grass and salt/mineral as long as the weather allows. The cows are brought back home for the winter and spring months, where the calving and AI'ing take place.

We require our cows to be structurally sound, fertile, easy fleshing with good feet, udder and disposition. We try to breed cattle that hold up to the extremes this country throws at us. If they can't breed back, hold their condition, and have good feet, all while raising a quality calf, then they leave; no second chances. We feel these kinds of genetics are what will keep not only us, but most importantly our customers, in the cattle business; it's not something we take lightly. After all, this isn't just a cattle business, it's a people business.

We are surrounded by some of the best family, friends and neighbors anyone could hope for and we feel very blessed to live where we do and raise our kids here. We are in the process of finalizing the details for our 2024 offering of bulls and heifers, so please stay-tuned for updates as spring gets closer!

If you aren't on our mailing list and would like to be, please give us a call. Feel free to follow us and look for ranch updates on our Pleasant Valley Angus Facebook page.



From left, Hazen, Cory, Sarah and Addison Foss. (Photos submitted)



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# 56th Annual GDAR Bull Sale Scheduled For March 28



Gartner-Denowh Angus Ranch (GDAR) is located just on the outskirts of Sidney, a close-knit family run ranch that focuses on raising efficient and functional cattle bred for the commercial cattle operation. GDAR began in 1957 when Joe Gartner and Russell Denowh bought 20 head of registered Angus cows from a dispersion sale in Montana. In 1974, Russ and his son, Micky, bought out Joe Gartner but kept the corporate name. At this time, they were calving about 150 cows and selling around 60 bulls per year. Russell's other son, Paul, joined the operation in 1984.

Micky, Paul, Casey and Chad Denowh all run the ranch together along with their families. GDAR is proud to be a family run operation. Chad and Jennifer's children make the 6th generation to live and work at the ranch headquarters. Lots of technological advances have been incorporated into the operation over the years including performance testing, carcass testing, artificial insemination, embryo transfer, and DNA testing, but the core principle of raising functional and profitable Angus cows remains the same.

GDAR operates mainly on grazing land, but they also have some farmland on which they raise feed. GDAR's cows are fed a low cost and low energy diet to weed out any inefficient cows, which means cows that can't function on a low input system in their environment are culled from the herd. A majority of GDAR's bulls go to commercial operations in a similar environment to their own, and their goal is to make sure their bulls surpass their expectations.

Gartner-Denowh Angus Ranch has been family run for over 60 years, and they are proud of the business and cattle they have established in the community. Learn more about GDAR on their website at <http://www.gdar-angus.com> or stop by and visit anytime.



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# Begger's Diamond V Ranch

Begger's Diamond V Ranch is located 9 miles south of Wibaux, MT, or 9 miles southwest of Beach, ND. They are a family-owned outfit that was started by Harry and Elaine over 75 years ago. In 1973, they're sons Bob and Bill decided that they needed to add value to the ranch if all 3 families could survive. They began Aling their Angus baldy and shorthorn cross cows to Simmental, when the first calves came they were very impressive. They were born unassisted even though many ranches used sires that didn't have that calving ease. The Beggers feel they choose the right genetics and had a strong cow base that calved easily. In 1975 they hosted their first sale only 13 head, it set a precedence right from the start. The black bulls had more value and were in demand. To survive they knew that they needed their Simmental cattle to be solid colored either black or red, although they did raise some traditional red and whites, they dispersed them after a few years. At that time mostly solid black and polled cattle were the focus in 2010 the ranch dispersed all the red cattle, and has focused on homozygous black and polled cattle. Today the ranch runs 600 mother cows all are black and polled. It consists of 525 black Simmental and SIm-Angus cows and 75 Angus cows. Everyone is registered and used to produce their 180 bulls they sell annually.

Today the ranch is operated by Bill and Darlene along with their son and daughter-in-law John and Alicia along with their children, twin daughters Maggie and Charlotte, and sons Harrison and Gabe, the 4th generation.

Their cowherd calves twice a year; 400 in the spring and 200 in the fall. By calving both spring and fall they offer 50 age advantaged 18 month old bulls, along with 130 spring born yearlings. 150 will sell in their production sale the first Wednesday in February and 30 will be sold privately. Their cattle are run rough and tough, meaning they winter-graze them as long as possible with little or no inputs until the snow gets deep. The breeding goal is to produce cattle that work for the commercial cowman and woman. They have to be gentle in nature, easy keeping, big volumed, and sensible sized. They need to calve unassisted and have an udder that their calf can nurse without assistance. They need to raise a stout calf that weans 50% of their body weight, breed back early, and survive on what mother nature throws at them. The ranch headquarters is open and lacks the deep wooded draws that would provide protection. Beggers breed cattle that can survive when the winter gets tough and the wind chills are harsh, only man-made protection and telephone poles offer protection. The Diamond V Ranch offers cattle that work for the cow calf-man and then go onto be profitable for the feeder and packer and then offers a great eating experience to the consumer that has no idea what it takes for that tender flavorful steak to hit their dinner plate. The goal at Begger's Diamond V



(L-R) Back: John and Alicia Begger. Middle: Charlotte, Magdalene and Harrison Begger. Front: Gabriel Begger. (Submitted photo)

Ranch is to provide a breeding opportunity that is profit driven, they offer genetics that will produce the perfect cross bred calf. Bill states, "Cross breeding is the most value added tool every cowman has access to. Don't over look it. It makes sense, dollars and cents, don't leave it on the table."

The Simmental cross are without a doubt some of the most sought after feeder cattle, they just work, they offer excellent feed efficiency and gainability, they offer the opportunity to sell more uniformity with less small light weight cut backs and the packers pay premiums for their excellent carcass values more of them hit the specs for carcass premiums. They hardly ever produce those 4 and 5 yield grade discounts. The best part is the daughters make super cows, they are easy keeping, breed back better, raise more pounds efficiently, black Sim-Angus cattle add value. The Begger's would like to invite you to their production sale Feb. 7, 2024, at the ranch, come take a look, you'll like what you see.



# Dakota Badlands Beef

**Submitted by Mark Voll, Dakota Badlands Beef**

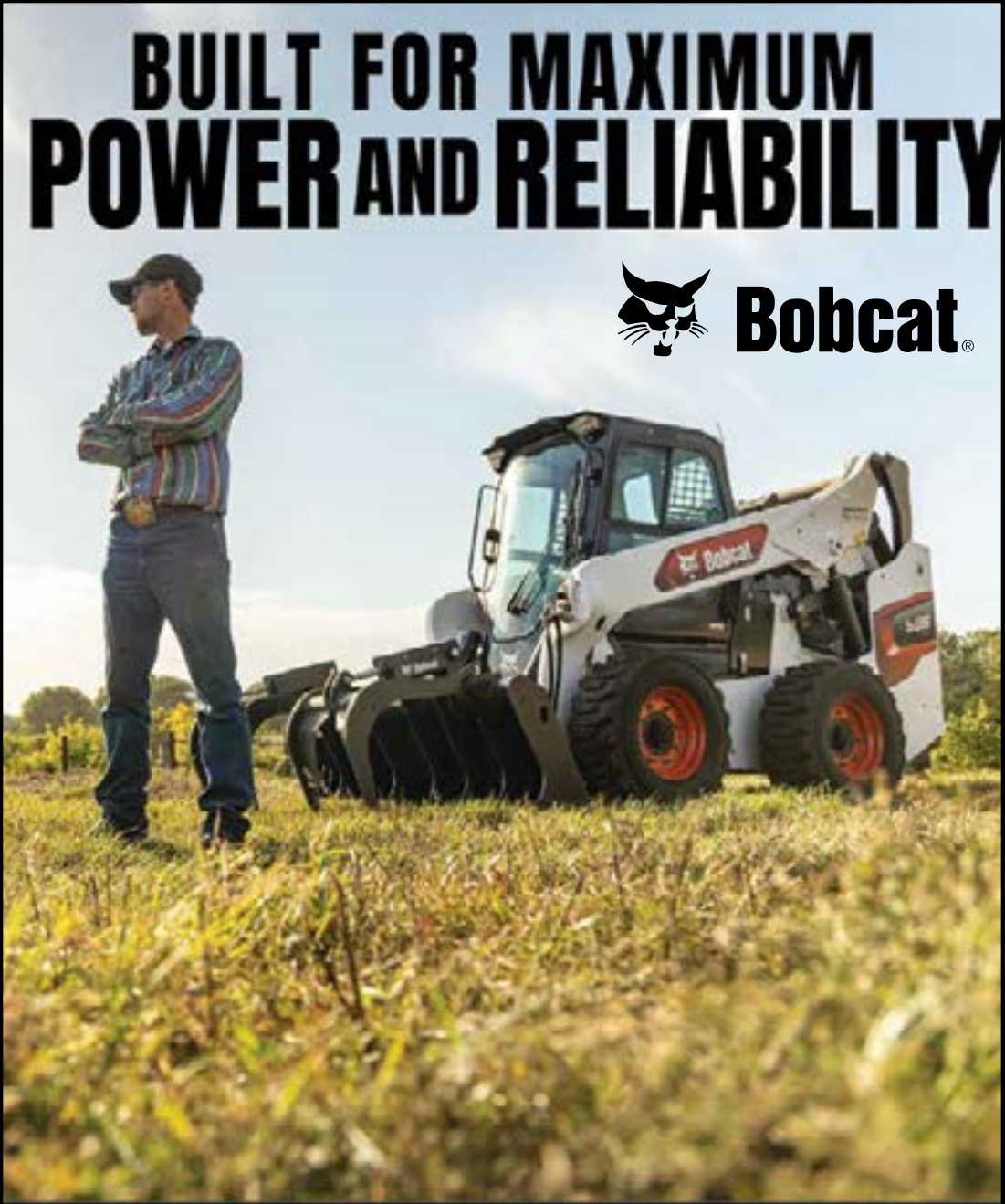
Mark Voll and Teresa Tescher Voll own Dakota Badlands Beef, located in the Squaw Gap area. This family owned and operated ranch is located 20 miles southeast of Sidney. Mark and Teresa were asked how long they've been selling beef. "Selling our own beef has been a part of our operation for many years. A highlight of raising cattle is having repeat customers come back and tell you how much they enjoy consuming our beef". As our son Tom and his wife Marley work their way into the ranch, this allows them another avenue to pursue down the road, if they choose," said Mark.


Dakota Badlands Beef is here to meet your individual beef needs. They are taking orders for future processing dates and have beef available in their State Health Department licensed freezer, located at the ranch near Sidney, MT, in McKenzie County, ND. They raise, feed, process, and market their own beef. All beef comes from the cattle raised and fed on the ranch, and finished at custom feedlots in the area. All of this is done locally from pasture to plate! Owner Mark Voll states, "We take pride in offering locally raised, high quality, beef." Dakota Badlands Beef is processed at their USDA inspected facility located in New Salem, ND, called 6-IN-1 Meats. Mark and Teresa own this processing plant along with 5 other North Dakota livestock producers. "Ownership in the plant guarantees processing dates on a consistent basis." After purchasing in 2019, we obtained USDA inspection status allowing us to sell beef across state lines. Beef can be picked up in New Salem, however most of the beef purchased in the Mon-Dak area has coordinated delivery options available by contacting us. Mark states, "One of the challenges we have encountered since we have been doing this on a larger scale is that some potential buyers of Dakota Badlands Beef will point out that our product is often more expensive than what they can purchase it for in the local retail outlet." They are most often correct. What consumers must remember is that when they purchase our beef, they are getting a specific, home raised animal. Doing business in

this manner ensures an excellent product, but the reality is our cost of production is higher verses those doing it on a large scale who provide the meat for the retail outlets throughout the region.


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Voll cattle. (Photo submitted)

# Bergman Honored With Irrigation Excellence Award

Submitted by Dani Quissell,

North Dakota Irrigation Association Executive Director

Bismarck — Retired joint supervisor of the Williston Research Extension Center and Eastern Ag Research Center, Jerald “Jerry” Bergman, was honored by the North Dakota Irrigation Association (NDIA) with the Irrigation Excellence Award.

This award, given annually by the NDIA to individuals who exhibit leadership, outstanding service, and advancement in the irrigation industry in North Dakota, was presented Dec. 7 during the 60th annual Joint North Dakota Water Convention and Irrigation Workshop, Bismarck.

For nearly 50 years, Bergman has been instrumental in the development of

irrigated research in North Dakota and Montana, a joint region encompassing more than 30 million acres. Bergman led the effort to bring resources and funding to the Williston and Sidney areas for irrigation research and development. In his 49-year career, he secured funding to develop the NDSU Nesson Valley Irrigation Research and Development Project (NVIRDP), and his legacy will continue with the Irrigation Research and Development Technology Transfer Center at the NVIRDP with construction in 2024.

Bergman retired in October 2022, but his leadership and forward-thinking regarding value-added agriculture using advanced irrigation technologies will live on in the region.

Retired joint supervisor of the Williston Research Extension Center and Eastern Ag Research Center, Jerald “Jerry” Bergman, was honored by the North Dakota Irrigation Association (NDIA) with the Irrigation Excellence Award. (Photo submitted)

An advertisement for Mon-Kota, Inc. featuring a large, close-up image of a Shark Wheel tire on the left side. The tire has a unique sine wave tread pattern. The background is a dark, textured surface. The text "LESS RUTS NO FLATS" is written in large, bold, white letters across the center. Below this, there is a paragraph of text describing the tire's benefits. At the bottom, the company name "Mon-Kota, Inc" is displayed along with contact information and logos for "Fertilizer • Irrigation Sales • Service" and the "Reinke plus program Platinum Plus Certified". A small logo for "Reinke" is in the bottom left corner.

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An advertisement for Whitetail Properties Real Estate. At the top, there is a logo of a hand holding a branch, followed by the text "WHITETAIL PROPERTIES REAL ESTATE" and "HUNTING | RANCH | FARM | TIMBER". Below this, the text "WE SELL LAND" is written in large, bold, black letters. Underneath, there is a silhouette of the state of Montana. To the right, there is a photo of Jeff and Meredith McKinney, a man and a woman, both smiling. Below the photo, their names and titles are listed: "JEFF &amp; MEREDITH MCKINNEY EASTERN MONTANA LAND SPECIALISTS". Contact information is provided: a phone number "406.690.1615", an email "jeff.mckinney@whitetailproperties.com", another phone number "406.480.1190", and another email "meredith.mckinney@whitetailproperties.com". At the bottom, the website "WHITETAIL PROPERTIES.COM" is displayed. In the bottom right corner, there is a small logo for "2023 BEST REALTOR" with a house icon.

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# Rugged & Regal

## Thiessen's Regency Acres Angus breeds top line, tough genetics

By Tamara Choat, Tri-State Livestock News

The hardy, performing Angus cattle raised on Regency Acres Angus look good wearing their work clothes – and get their jobs done. “Our environment here is quite brutal,” says owner Russ Thiessen. “We believe that our cattle are unique in that if they can survive our extremes in weather and on our short grass, they can survive anywhere.”

The Thiessen family: Russ and Jill and their children, daughter Téa, who teaches math in Stanford, MT and Tyler, who is now the fifth generation on the ranch, raise their registered herd in rugged central eastern Montana near Lambert, just 30 miles from the North Dakota border, on land near where Thiessen's great-grandfather homesteaded in the early 1900s.

“As (the second generation) grew up they branched off and bought their own places, which is where we are based out of now, on land my grandfather bought,” says Thiessen, although they still operate on some of the original homestead land.

Today, the Thiessens run a diversified farming and purebred Angus ranch, holding an annual production sale either the first or second Friday in April where they sell approximately 80 yearling bulls and 30-40 purebred yearling heifers. Crops include dry land wheat, corn, peas, lentils, barley, oats, safflower and canola. “We got our start in registered Angus in 1957,” says Thiessen. When his dad, Jim, took over the operation in the late '60s the commercial cows were sold and the ranch began running 100% registered cattle. “We've always incorporated the best tools to identify and progress the best animals.” In the '70s they enrolled in the Montana Beef Performance Association, a state Extension records-keeping center that pioneered herd selection methods and contributed to the formation of the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) program. “We also incorporated artificial insemination, carcass ultrasound, genomic testing, and herd testing for diseases like BVD and Johnes to make sure they are free and healthy for our customers,” says Thiessen. Today, the Thiessen herd is one of only a few that is state-certified Johnes-free.

“In the mid-'90s I returned home after college, married my bride of now 25 years and we had our two kids.”

Today, their annual work cycle is similar to many purebred operations in the region. Calving starts the first of February with the Aled heifers. Thiessen says they try to stick to a 60-day calving cycle. Heifers calve from Feb. 1 to April 1; cows from the end of February to the end of April. Breeding begins in early May with synchronized heifers, and all the cows except the late calvers are also Aled on a natural cycle then hauled or trailed out to summer pastures with the herd bulls. Summer is spent haying, spraying, and fencing with harvest occurring mostly in August. Fall is spent hauling hay, fencing, moving cattle, preg-checking and fixing corrals. Calves are weaned around October 1 and put into the feedlot. Bulls are fed a ration designed for growth without getting them fat. Heifers are kept in the feedlot for around a month then turned out to pasture for the winter. Winter is usually time to haul crops to the elevator, maintain equipment and travel around to look at cattle.

“We are very diligent in the genetics we incorporate into our herd,” says Thiessen. “The cattle must have length, depth of body, be angular and have good feet. The females must be good-uddered with mild dispositions. Our customers say our cattle are pleasant to be around, last longer, and leave them with great females and steers that are highly marketable.”

The mission statement of Regency Acres Angus is: “To propagate the genetics that return the most dollars per acre for our customers.”

“That is still and always will be our primary goal,” says Thiessen. “Personally



From left, Tyler, Russ, Tea, and Jill Thiessen. (Submitted photo)

I am striving to leave a profitable business and livelihood for my son and future grandkids, and to teach them that success isn't just measured in dollars, but in fulfillment in what you are doing.”

Thiessen says he likes the genetic side of the purebred business, and the process of searching out the right bulls to mate the cows to. “I enjoy studying the pedigrees and mating the cattle to try to improve both the dam and the sire in the offspring,” he says. “Tyler has that unique ability to sit and have a conversation for hours with someone he just met so he likes the public relations part of the business.”

Don Switzer, Switzer Land Company, near Richey, MT, runs a herd of commercial cattle and has been a customer of the Thiessens for many years. “They just have really top of the line bulls, whether you're looking for a heifer bull or a cow bull,” he says. “He's really particular about what sires he uses; he has good bloodlines.”

Gary Tescher owns Three Bars Angus Ranch southeast of Sidney, MT, across the North Dakota state line. He's been buying Thiessen bulls for around 20 years.

“First of all, they're good people so you can trust the cattle and the information they put out on them, which is dangd sure important,” says Tescher. “They've got good bulls and good cattle, but the other thing I notice and I admire about them is they don't necessarily use the same sires as everybody else is using. They're not just following the crowd. I can appreciate that too – it makes me think they think for themselves.”

Thiessen says that while they put in long hours working, they still must make time to play. A few years ago he and a couple of his friends got into barbeque. They built their own smoker (nicknamed “The Mistress” by their wives) and cook for weddings, parties and even funerals. Thiessen and his son also enjoy hunting, and Tyler has his own “herd” of hound dogs he uses to eliminate raccoons for the neighbors.

“The work load is immense and there isn't enough profit in agriculture to afford to hire on more employees – even if you can find one. So the hours are long and stressful but we get to work alongside our kids, our wives, our fathers and grandfathers and we get to work in God's garden every day.

“When you realize the value in that, there isn't a more 'profitable' occupation in the world.”

The Regency Acres annual production sale will be held on April 12. They will be selling 85 bulls and 30 replacement heifers.

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# Rambur Charolais: Unique Opportunities Keep Sidney Ranch Thriving



By Rebecca Colnar

Howard Rambur started his herd as a youngster with two crossbred Charolais heifers and a purebred Charolais bull. “I got a small loan from the local bank and was on my way to having my purebred business. Of course, I’ve been borrowing money ever since,” said Rambur, who raises purebred Charolais cattle near Sidney, MT.

Even though his father was primarily a sugar beet farmer, young Rambur’s interest in livestock was piqued when he began working with cattle as 4-H projects. He wanted to own something different than Angus, and the powerful, white Charolais cattle caught his eye. In the late 1960s, the breed, which originated in eastern France, arrived on the scene in Montana. Rambur decided to make the Charolais breed his life’s work as he admired their outstanding performance and especially found that crossbreeding created a superior bovine.

The rancher raised four daughters, with some involved in 4-H, successfully showing cattle at the Richland County Fair as well as helping on the ranch. His grandkids are now being successful showing steers at the same fair, which continues to thrive. While his daughters were growing up, Rambur continued breed improvement.

Rambur cows and bulls are raised on the western side of Sidney in some rough country. “You need a good horse and dogs to move cattle out there,” said Rambur. “I find that Charolais have better bone and feet, which causes them to have longevity. I have a lot of customers who are using our bulls up to six years of age, which is double the longevity of other breeds.”

Although he credits the Angus breed for their “tremendous job marketing their meat,” Rambur pointed out that crossbred cattle provide hybrid vigor and have been bringing an extra 10% in sale weight. Because of that, not only does he have Charolais bulls, but also an Angus herd.

Their bull sale the second Saturday of April is generally well-attended with 80-100 head of Charolais and Angus bulls seeing their way across the auction block.

He is curious where the beef prices are going to go. “I don’t know where this is all going to transition. It will be interesting. Everyone in the cattle business needs to start making money. It shocks me that we are still selling fat cattle the way we are when we need to be moving our meat and product better. With COVID, many of the restaurants are half empty and those were the restaurants that were buying high-end steaks. Even before COVID, but even more so now, people want to know where their meat comes from. More people are looking closer to home, so we are seeing a real shortage of small packing houses to handle the increasing number of ranchers wanting to have cattle locally processed. There are only a few large packers now and you have to play their game as many are foreign-owned.”

Rambur livestock has expanded their sale opportunities, selling cattle and meat to foreign countries; breeding stock has been shipped to Turkey while fat cattle have been shipped to JBS in Greeley, CO, to be processed for the Chinese market.

Rambur talks about how the international connections happened. The Turkish connection started when an exporter driving through Virginia spotted some “buck-skin” (Charolais/Red Angus cross) in a field and asked what they were and their origin. Howard Rambur was contacted, and the Turkish exporters visited three times to develop a plan.

“The Turkish visitors told me that Montana looked like Turkey. We talked about agricultural production, and it turns out they are very modern,” said Rambur. “They farm with center pivots and John Deere tractors. At the time we were working out the details, war with Syria was going on and Turkey had an influx of refugees. They realized the need for producing food for an expanding population.”

Rambur coordinated the shipment of 700 buckskin calves and 900 silvers (Charolais x Angus) with the balance of the load Red Angus and Angus for a total of 2,400. Numerous tests, blood work, papers, and various quarantine sites later, the cattle shipped in early February 2017. The boat ride took 30-plus days. The cattle were dispersed into different areas of Turkey and are being used for breeding stock to help boost the country’s meat industry in future years.

As for beef to China, Rambur had been dealing with JBS and they asked him to sign up to send some of his cattle/beef to China..

Although exporting provides another option for cattle marketing, Rambur explained, “I get exporters calling me all the time, but the money exchange rate is horrid. Keep in mind when you deal with foreign countries, it’s good to deal with the same exporter.”

In addition to raising purebred bulls and sending their livestock across the ocean, a unique service provided by the ranch is feeding bulls in the feedlot. Many custom yards won’t accept bulls because they’re, well, bulls.

“You need to understand the bull mentality,” Rambur said. “Our RC Feedlot has always fed purebred bulls, performance breeds as well as cull bulls. Rambur Charolais offers a bull buy back. When a customer is ready to change bulls out, we will purchase the culls at a premium, feed them at the RC Feedlot, then send them on to the processors.”

Rambur explained that feeding bulls as a business happened because of the contacts he had at American Foods where he had previously been a buyer. The RC Feedlot already had experience feeding purebred bulls for production sales,

Continued on page 24.

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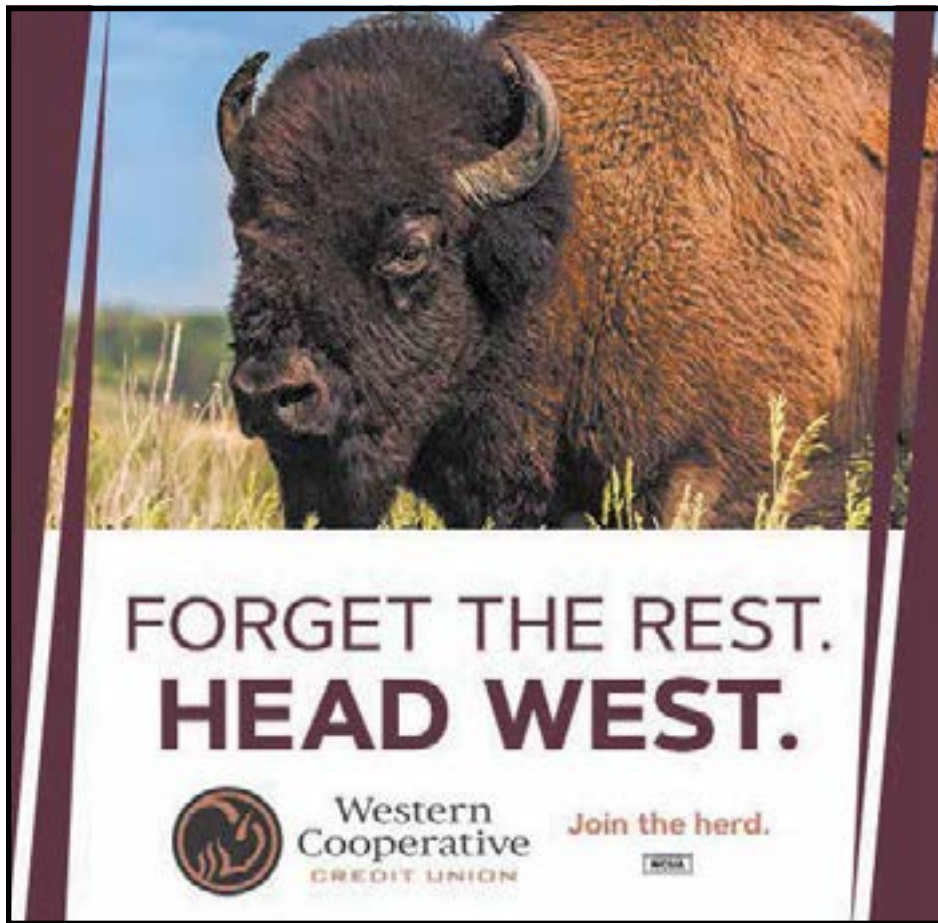
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## Rambur Charolais... Continued from page 22.

so when he was talking to the people at American Foods, the idea developed for Rambur to feed cull bulls. The ranch is able to put quick weight on bulls, and there is a constant market for them.

“Bulls are better than feeder cattle because there is a quick turnaround. You feed them for 30 days and they’re gone. I know bulls and I can put quick weight on them. Plus, it’s a constant market even in the winter and it works well because I have my own trucks. When the processor needs a full load of bulls to kill, I can fill those spots quickly instead of their buyers going to many sale barns.”

The hard-working rancher hopes his grandkids will continue to appreciate ranch life; they help with various aspects of the ranch, and all have horses to ride when help is needed. “We try to get them involved as much as we can. One of my grandsons is 14 and this year he hasn’t been in school much due to COVID closings, so he has assisted with calving and wants to learn more from me. He received a beginning rancher loan from Community Bank in Dickinson, ND to purchase five purebred bred heifers. I applaud that bank for doing that,” said Rambur.

Despite the challenges of juggling the purebred business, running a feedlot, and keeping up with the markets, Rambur said he wouldn’t trade ranching for anything.

“Whether I’m working with the cattle, watching my dogs working or having my grandkids join me on the ranch, you can’t beat it. We have a fantastic lifestyle.”

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# Stortz Angus Ranch

## Submitted by Stortz Angus Ranch

Stortz Angus Ranch has been in the cattle business since the early 1900s. Located against the rugged Big Horn Sheep Mountains of Lindsay, MT, the ranch has withstood the test of time through consistent breeding and prioritized selection decisions. With over 30 years of utilizing the top genetics in the Angus breed through artificial insemination, the cattle you see today are as good as they come. "We focus our efforts in making functional cattle that prosper in the rough terrain and extreme weather that we see here in eastern Montana," commented Ted Stortz.

"Disposition, mothering ability and longevity are the most important," Ted explained when describing what traits they focus on when selecting females. Stortz Angus cows begin calving the end of February, pairs are turned out on grass around the first of May and the calves are weaned the first week of October. Both cows and calves are expected to be low maintenance. Cows must be able to raise a calf on their own and calves do not see any creep feed before being weaned.

The bulls you see in the Stortz Angus Ranch Annual Production Sale are a product of years of experience and industry knowledge. Stortz Angus strives to produce bulls with growth traits that will pay for commercial producers while still maintaining "sleep at night" birth weights. "We like to offer a selection of bulls and genetics to our customers. We always have a group of good calving ease and maternal bulls but also offer high weaning weight, more growth bulls," Ted commented. Ted also explained they select bulls heavily on docility.

The Stortz family invites you to their 33rd Annual Production Sale held Feb. 28, 2024 at the Glendive Livestock Exchange beginning at 1 p.m. The sale will also be broadcasted online through DV Auctions if you are unable to make it to Glendive. Videos will be posted prior to sale. Seventy-five registered Angus Bulls and seventy-five commercial Angus heifers will sell.

You can view the bulls and females along with their dams prior to the sale anytime at the ranch, north of Lindsay. Bulls will also be on display at the Beef Breeders Show in Miles City. Feel free to contact Ted at 406-584-7585 with any questions or if you would like a catalog mailed to you. You can also keep up with Stortz Angus Ranch on Facebook! Stortz Ranch wishes you peace and joy throughout the holiday season and the New Year! See you in February!

Robert "Bob" Stortz started what is now known as Stortz Angus Ranch when he returned from the Korean War in 1953. The ranch ventured into both polled and horned Herefords along with F1 crosses before ultimately landing on the Black Angus

breed. Bob and his wife Carla Jeanne had seven children together. Their only son, Ted Stortz, now heads the Stortz Angus Ranch. Ted and his wife Tarena have four children; Chelsea, Robbie, Tate, and Ben.

Ted bought the ranch's first registered cows in 1989 from Raaum Angus. The first Stortz Angus bulls were sold private treaty for several years. The first official Stortz Angus Ranch Annual Bull Sale was held in 1998 at the Glendive Livestock Exchange where it is still held to this day.



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# LYIP Continues Fight Over Maintenance Costs Of Fish Bypass

By Dianne Swanson

In November 2023, a delegation from the Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project visited Washington, DC, to personally advocate for the preservation of our local communities, including farmers in the Yellowstone Valley, and nationwide. Making the trip were LYIP general manager James Brower and his wife, Stacey; Mark Iverson, Montana Irrigation District president; and Todd Cayko, North Dakota Irrigation District vice-president.

The issue at hand is the cost of maintaining the newly constructed fish bypass, which is not owned by the irrigation district but is in need of massive repairs, and will always need maintenance. LYIP has always had to repay the cost of the irrigation infrastructure, including the initial construction of the irrigation facilities. The bypass, however, is not a part of the irrigation infrastructure and does not affect irrigation in any way.

It was built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to help mitigate the effects of their dams on the Missouri River and comply with preserving the pallid sturgeon under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). It is located on Bureau of Reclamation land, not private land, and was built without an agreement from LYIP. The irrigation project predates the bypass by almost 120 years, and the ESA is not retroactive. LYIP has neither the equipment, nor the dollars, required to maintain the fish bypass, nor is it their responsibility.

The irrigation project is lobbying Congress to ensure the fish bypass is correctly classified as a separate endangered species project or that Congress make a permanent determination that any dollars spent on the Federal Endangered Species Fish Bypass are not reimbursable by the irrigation districts.

With the invaluable assistance of Drew Lesofski, LYIP's lobbyist in DC, the group attained access to various wings of the capitol and were safely escorted in and out, something that was difficult due to ongoing demonstrations and parts of the building being sealed off from the public. They were also able to meet with all of the Montana representatives and their staffers, as well as, staffers from North Dakota Senators Cramer and Hoeven and Representative Armstrong.

Meetings started off with Montana Coffee with Senators Tester and Daines, Representatives Rosendale and Zinke, and their staff. "It's open to everyone from Montana," Brower stated. "It was really great. We were able to get contact information and actually visit with the Montana representatives and their staffers, who are hugely important, in a casual atmosphere."

Individual meetings followed, starting with Senator Daines and his staff. Both were very helpful according to Brower. Representative Rosendale was next. He had actually drafted language in a bill through the Natural Resources committee to have the Corps provide funding for Fish Bypass maintenance. However, that language was removed since it required money and it was determined that it was not germane to the Natural Resources bill being considered in the House at the time. The proposed bill will be going through the Senate and, with the full support of Senator Tester who is a senior legislator and on the powerful Appropriations Committee, the bill should pass. Without House support, however, neither a determination on responsibility nor funding for bypass maintenance has been resolved.

The following day, important meetings with Senator Tester and his staff as well as the Western Caucus and the Senate Appropriations Committee staff took place. Most senators were headed home for the weekend by that time but Brower said the group was very pleased that Senator Tester made time to visit with them before they left. He said Senator Tester and Representative Rosendale were very supportive, as were all the congressmen they met with.

Brower explained that the Western Caucus meeting was critical since it is a bipartisan group of senators from all the western states. LYIP was able to explain the importance of the irrigation project, not just to farmers; but also to cities, towns, and businesses.



**The Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project delegation to Washington, DC was welcomed by Montana's Congressmen. Pictured (L-R) are: Senator Jon Tester, Representative Ryan Zinke, Stacey Brower, James Brower, Mark Iverson, Todd Cayko, Senator Steve Daines and Representative Matt Rosendale. (Photo submitted)**

Everyone they met seemed excited to meet actual real people from Montana, especially those who live along the Yellowstone, and treated them very well according to Brower. The presence of Stacey Brower was also valuable as she was able to represent the Montana families the delegates are sworn to protect and present a woman's point of view. Making personal connections with staffers was important since they would be the ones drafting actual legislation. Brower was impressed with how attentive those staffers were, asking detailed questions, and paying attention to the issues that were being discussed.

"The whole purpose of the trip was to point out that the Bureau of Reclamation and the Corps never got any agreement from the irrigation district to maintain or be financially responsible for the fish bypass. The bypass has nothing to do with irrigation; it is not inside the irrigation district boundaries, but on Bureau land. Without maintenance, the bypass will stop passing endangered species. It will erode wider and become shallower, it will become a swamp instead of a safe passage for the fish. Or it could wash out and the river could move away from the dam, the head works, and the canal; drying up the entire valley," Brower stated emphatically. "The irrigation district does not have any equipment large enough to maintain the bypass, the Corps does," he added.

LYIP strongly encourages everyone to contact their congressmen and urge them to pass language that maintenance and repair costs will not be reimbursable by the irrigators. That language does not require appropriations, making that bill easier to pass with bi-partisan support. It was suggested by the Senate Appropriations staff that the 2024 Water Resource Development bill they are currently working on would probably be the best place to insert language like 'Fish bypass expenses are not reimbursable by the irrigation districts'. This language would protect not just LYIP irrigators, but all the drinking wells in our valley including the cities' wells.

In Montana, contact Senators Tester and Daines and Representatives Rosendale and Zinke. In North Dakota, contact Senators Cramer and Hoeven and Representatives Armstrong to ask for their active support of the LYIP amendment.

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