

Visiting the Heart of Texas

National Angus Tour showcases Texas Angus, genetics.



by **KINDRA GORDON**,
field editor

Angus enthusiasts from across the United States — and even a few international guests — traveled to the Texas countryside for the National Angus Tour Friday, Nov. 3, just prior to the 2017 Angus Convention hosted Nov. 4-6, 2017, in downtown Fort Worth. The tour was

hosted by the Texas Angus Association and visited two locations: Hoofstock Genetics Bovine Division, Ranger, Texas; and Wilks Ranch, Eastland, Texas. More than 450 people attended the daylong tour.

At Hoofstock Genetics, tour-goers learned about the elite embryo transfer (ET) and *in-vitro* fertilization (IVF) facility. The company was founded in 2010 by Todd Stroud, who had an initial focus on assisted reproduction in deer.

Today, Hoofstock's deer division, which works with 30 farms in six states, boasts more combined experience in whitetail deer ET than any other company in the world. Stroud earned degrees in animal science and veterinary physiology and pharmacology from Texas A&M,

The Wilks Ranch stop offered cattle viewing from about a dozen breeders and comments from Texas Ag Commissioner Sid Miller.

Texas couple enjoys senior years with Angus cattle and people

While at the Wilks Ranch stop on the 2017 National Angus Tour, attendees had the opportunity to view cattle on display from Elm Creek Cattle Co. and to visit with the operation's enthusiastic owners, Robbie and Suzie Bean.

The couple, who are both nearing the age of 70, established Elm Creek Cattle Co. near Sulphur Springs, Texas, in 2001. They took a circuitous path to the Angus business. Suzie grew up with horses, so their initial agricultural involvement involved Quarter Horses. In 1991, they traded a group of Quarter Horses for 200 Holstein cows and got into the dairy business.

"They were really good horses," Robbie says of the trade.

In 2001, they made another big shift and sold their 350-cow dairy herd and transitioned to the beef business. The couple chose to focus on raising purebred Angus and say it was a natural choice

because Angus was the beef breed with the most data available.

From the beginning their bull marketing was set up as a cooperator effort. The Beans were first affiliated with Gardiner Angus Ranch in Kansas. Today they market bulls from their 100-head Angus cow herd through Texas-based 44 Farms.

To build their herd, the Beans utilize artificial insemination (AI) and embryo transfer (ET) to harness top-quality genetics. They are currently using a fall-calving program that begins about Aug. 20 and spans 60 days.

In explaining their genetic focus, the couple says they strive to raise cattle that excel in the traits of economic importance without sacrificing phenotype and functionality.

"We hope those cattle that carry the Elm Creek prefix are the best of both worlds," Robbie says. A career highlight for the couple was having a bull they



Suzie and Robbie Bean founded Elm Creek Cattle Co. in 2001.

bred and raised sell through the 44 Farms sale and eventually be featured as a stud sire (44 Arsenal 4W07) through Accelerated Genetics.

Regarding Angus genetic trends in Texas, Robbie explains, "Texas is a big \$B (beef value index) state." He explains that with many "eared" cattle raised by commercial producers in the state, those producers recognize that to get cattle to grade they need Angus genetics with marbling.

In addition to raising Angus cattle, the Beans have been active in the Texas Angus Association (TAA). Robbie has served on the TAA Board of Directors since 2005 and will serve as president of the 650-member association in 2018. Together the couple has also managed all TAA sales since 2010, which include four sales per year (for more information visit www.taasales.com).

The Beans say they've found their passion in Angus, and enjoy giving back to TAA after all the mentoring they received. Suzie concludes, "We love the cattle, but we really love the people."

and credits his father, veterinarian Brad Stroud, for being his mentor.

Stroud established the bovine division of Hoofstock Genetics in 2012. He told those attending the Angus Tour that today's IVF technology has made ET much more efficient and cost-effective. Compared to a traditional flush, which



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requires a series of injections over several days, IVF reduces the labor because there are no preparatory shots. Cows can be collected the same day they arrive and can be put back in the pasture. He also explained that IVF can be done every two weeks, as opposed to every six to eight weeks with traditional flushing.

"The stress on the cow with IVF is minimal and, as a result, we are seeing better embryos and healthier calves," he noted. For more information visit www.hoofstockgenetics.com/.

Wilks Ranch stop

For a steak lunch and an afternoon of viewing cattle on display from about a dozen Texas Angus breeders, the tour visited Wilks Ranch, which is owned by brothers Dan and Farris Wilks. They started in the cattle business in Cisco, Texas, and today have expanded to six large ranch holdings in the states of Texas, Idaho, Utah, Montana and Oregon. The brothers established a registered Angus seedstock operation in 2013. They now manage 400-600 Angus cows at their Eastland, Texas, ranch. For more information visit www.wilksranches.com/about-us/.

At this stop, tour attendees were welcomed by Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller. Miller, a cattle producer himself, spoke of the importance of agriculture and the beef industry in Texas and around the world.

He noted Texas is the No. 1 beef-producing state (there were 12.3 million head in the state in 2016). With the beef Texas produces, you could build

a hamburger super highway, laying hamburgers end-to-end, and they'd wrap around the earth 400 times.

He emphasized the importance of global outreach in selling both live cattle and beef exports. He shared that he has been involved in mission trips to Argentina, Israel and China, and expressed excitement in the opening of U.S. beef trade to China in June 2017.

In his closing remarks, Miller shared that his ties to agriculture also include breeding and raising Pearl, a horse that has been the PRCA Tie-Down Horse of the Year, has won AQHA World Championships, and has been ridden by Cody Ohl numerous times in the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo. Miller concluded that Pearl "is more famous than me."



Editor's Note: Kindra Gordon is a freelance writer and cattlewoman from Whitewood, S.D. This article is part of Angus Media's coverage of the 2017 Angus Convention and National Angus Tour, hosted Nov. 3-6 in Fort Worth, Texas. Visit the Convention Newsroom (www.angus.org/Media/News/AngusConvention.aspx) for additional coverage.

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+1.7	+74	+126	+24
CW	MARB	REA	FAT
I+36	I+.58	I+.44	I+.012
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+64.63	+94.56	+36.00	+129.27

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MGS: WK Replay

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BW	WW	YW	Milk
+1.9	+59	+112	+33
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+53	+37	+70	+0.06
SW	SF	SG	SB
+63.95	+70.80	+28.47	+139.70

Sire: #Sitz Upward 307R
MGS: GAR Exaltation 3144

Hy-View Phantom

Reg. No. 16711328



BW	WW	YW	Milk
+2.7	+92	+153	+16
CW	MARB	REA	FAT
+70	+60	+44	+0.37
SW	SF	SG	SB
+78.88	+143.22	+25.76	+187.16

Sire: Sankeys Lazer 609 of 6N
MGS: GAR Grid Maker

Styles Cash R400

Reg. No. 17571309



BW	WW	YW	Milk
+3.7	+63	+119	+19
CW	MARB	REA	FAT
+50	+62	+77	-0.07
SW	SF	SG	SB
+48.80	+90.70	+41.05	+159.31

Sire: *Barstow Cash
MGS: Bon View New Design 1407

SAV Heartland 1287

Reg. No. 17016513



BW	WW	YW	Milk
+3.4	+70	+130	+21
CW	MARB	REA	FAT
+44	+25	+24	+0.29
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+55.56	+102.47	+15.22	+122.50

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