



# ANGUS

## BEEF BULLETIN

"The Commercial Cattleman's Angus Connection"

Volume 17, Number 3 • September 2002

## INSIDE

### Features & News

- Circle A Ranch is named the 2002 Beef Improvement Federation Seedstock Producer of the Year..... 20
- Truth begets profit. How do your cattle compare to those in other programs? ..... 26
- Feeding whole soybeans to cows hastens rebreeding..... 34
- Commercial and purebred Angus producers honored at BIF annual meeting ..... 43

### Column Links

- Up Front ..... 6
- Association Highlights ..... 10
- Commercial Relations Department ..... 14
- Editor's Link ..... 18
- Certified Angus Beef LLC ..... 24
- Here's the Premium ..... 32
- Veterinary Link ..... 36
- ARCNet Angus-Influence Sales ..... 38
- Angus Sales ..... 44
- Advertiser Index ..... 52

### Staff

- Angus Productions Inc. .... 4
- American Angus Association ..... 10
- Certified Angus Beef LLC ..... 24
- Regional Managers ..... 49

### Services

- Angus Journal Subscription form ..... 23
- American Angus Association membership form ..... 49

## ON THE 'NET

[www.angusbeefbulletin.com](http://www.angusbeefbulletin.com)  
[www.angusproductions.com](http://www.angusproductions.com)  
[www.angusjournal.com](http://www.angusjournal.com)  
[www.angus.org](http://www.angus.org)  
[www.certifiedangusbeef.com](http://www.certifiedangusbeef.com)

## BETWEEN ISSUES

The most current listing of Angus sales and events is available online at [www.angusalmanac.com](http://www.angusalmanac.com)

Sale reports are available online at [www.angusproductions.com/api\\_salering\\_set.html](http://www.angusproductions.com/api_salering_set.html)

Both are searchable by breeder, location and date.

## Middle of the Road

*A Georgia producer hits marketing targets with balanced-trait bulls.*

by **BECKY MILLS**

When it came time to go bull shopping, Claxton, Ga., commercial producer Bubba Crosby got a sermon from an experienced shopper.

"David preached to me, 'Let's stay in the middle of the road so we can have at least two markets,'" Crosby recalls.

That message, delivered by American Angus Association regional manager David Gazda, hit home, and Crosby is reaping the rewards. Last August, he sold a truckload of seven-weight Angus-cross steers for \$91.20 per hundredweight (cwt.) at the Southeast Georgia Cattle Marketing Association board sale. "I was well-satisfied with the sale results," he states.

As for the heifers, he has at least three markets for them. After Gazda helped him sort them in late summer, he sent 24 to the University of Georgia Heifer Evaluation and Reproductive Development (HERD) program. Next spring he'll have the option of selling the bred heifers in the HERD sale or bringing them back to his operation. The rest of the replacement-quality heifers had homes waiting with local producers. "I sold heifers that would satisfy anybody," Crosby remarks. Feeders snapped up the bottom end of the weaned heifers.

### The beginning

Crosby's quest for the middle of the road started seven years ago when he bought his farm. There was a set of Braford-type cows bred to Limousin bulls on the place through a grazing lease. He ended up buying them.

"They were having good calves, but I wanted to make a change," he says. "It looked to me like black and



Bubba Crosby says Angus and Angus-cross cattle bring more at sales.

black-baldie cattle were bringing more at sales." He bought two Angus bulls and started buying Angus and black-baldie heifers, while phasing out the Brahman-influenced cattle.

Then, four years ago, when he was ready to buy more Angus bulls, he called Gazda, who immediately came and helped him inventory his current herd.

University of Tennessee Extension animal scientist Warren Gill says this is a key component of shopping successfully for bulls. "Start with an understanding of where your cows are," he advises. "Use your best judgment, or preferably, records. Then, match your goals with the traits you need. That will moderate your herd."

He adds, "If you have taken care of the basics, you have strengthened your ability to maintain a balanced program."

"The first time I went into his herd, it was a pretty functional set of cows," Gazda recalls. However, there was still a good bit of variation in size, mostly due to the Braford and Brangus-type cattle, which also tended to be his higher-maintenance cattle.

Since he had a ready market for the eared cattle, he continued to market them to other producers. That left a core herd of black and black-baldie

cattle with an average frame score of 5.5 and weights in the 1,100- to 1,150-pound (lb.) range.

In the meantime, Crosby and Gazda searched for 2-year-old Angus bulls.

"We tried to buy bulls as closely related as possible, genetically and phenotypically similar, balanced-trait bulls, dual-purpose bulls," Gazda says. "We wanted them to be above average or better in all traits with low to moderate birth weight since some of them would be used on heifers. We wanted adequate growth and adequate milk, but milk that would match his forage-based environment."

Most of all, he stressed "bulls that would work if he chose to retain replacement heifers but whose steermates could do well in the feedlot and cooler."

Gill approves of their search for balanced-trait bulls. "If you get all excited about one trait, say low birth weight, which is generally linked to small animals, the calves of those low-birth-weight bulls may not grow as fast as you'd like.

"Sure, low birth weight is a great trait," says the animal scientist, "but we tend to go to extremes in the cattle business."

(Continued on page 4)

**Middle** (from page 1)

Gill adds, "There are plenty of bulls in the Angus breed that can hit a balance."

Gazda recommended reputable breeders, breeders he knew would stand behind their bulls, as well as breeders with Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) data and a history of producing and marketing performance-tested bulls. He studied their expected progeny differences (EPDs), records, and did pedigree analyses. The second calf crop from those bulls is now on the ground, and, Gazda says, "Bubba says they are the best set of calves he's had."

The calves from the first calf crop excelled, too. The steers he sold on the late August 2001 board sale had a shrunk weight of 708 lb. and had just been weaned in late July. They gained 2.35 lb. a day on Tifton 85 Bermuda grass between weaning and the sale. The heifers, which had not been implanted, gained 2.02 lb. during the same period.

The herd's conception rates are on the top of the scale. Even though he is in the process of shortening his breeding season, which is currently at 90 days, and even though he had four or five purchased cows that calved late, he had 177 pregnant cows out of 187 head.

**Next step: uniformity**

He's still not satisfied. "We're pushing on uniformity," Crosby says. He and Gazda searched for more bulls and ended up with seven Durabull-

sired full brothers who went in with the cows for his January-February 2002 breeding season.

Although they fine-tuned their selection, they kept the same middle-of-the-road philosophy. "They are balanced-trait bulls," Gazda says.

"We put more emphasis on carcass traits this time, but we weren't looking at extremes. They had ultrasound and carcass EPDs available, so we used them as a portion of our selection criteria."

He adds, "They have strong maternal EPDs and he can retain their daughters as replacements, but their steers should feed well."

"You can buy an Angus bull designed to do what you want him to do," Crosby emphasizes.

"We're working on keeping half sisters out of these embryo transfer bulls," he continues. "I'd love to get to the point where every cow in the field is a half sib, then breed them to full brothers. That will be a genetically engineered cow that will work anywhere."

As a bonus, the breeders of the seven bulls, Yon Family Farms of Ridge Spring, S.C., offers a buy-back program for the steers sired by their bulls. This gives Crosby yet another marketing option.

Whether it is a feeder steer or a replacement-quality heifer, Crosby expects the animal to be predictable, consistent and top-quality. He continues to fine-tune his herd so they'll meet those criteria. "Right now we're working on going through the cows and culling them on structure, feet



Bubba Crosby gets marketing advice from Jim Collins, Bulloch County Extension agent and a member of the Southeast Georgia Cattle Marketing Association.



Claxton, Ga., producer Bubba Crosby increases his marketing options by staying with balanced-trait cattle.

and eyes. We're about to where we can start culling on performance."

**A good support staff**

Gazda's next goal for Crosby is to enroll him in the American Angus Association's Angus Beef Record Service (BRS).

"We want to put together a first-class operation," Crosby emphasizes.

Gazda says he is well on his way. "Bubba has gone out and sought help. He has surrounded himself with good people – a good support staff."

At the head of the list is farm manager Michael Eason, who tends to the cattle on a day-to-day basis. Veterinarian Keith Miller and Henry Jones at Pfizer Animal Health have helped him implement a comprehensive herd health program. Kenny Sikes helped him put together his first-class working facilities, including a much-used set of scales. The University of Georgia forage specialists and the folks at J.B. Anderson Fertilizer help him maintain his picture-perfect Tifton 85 Bermuda grass. Bulloch County Extension agent Jim Collins, who is an integral part of the Southeast Georgia Cattle Marketing Association, helps him on the marketing end. Kevin and Lydia Yon, his seedstock suppliers, guide him on bull selection.

"I'm not the smartest fella in the world, but I can read and I will listen," he says.

Then, of course, there is Gazda. "David was really instrumental in getting this started," Crosby emphasizes. "He is the only person who has ever bought a bull for me — he's the only one I'll let spend my money."

He recalls Gazda's earlier sermon and emphasizes, "We're staying in the middle of the road."

Founded March 1985  
**ANGUS**  
**BEEF BULLETIN**  
"The Commercial Cattleman's Angus Connection"

Produced and published by Angus Productions Inc. in cooperation with the American Angus Association and Certified Angus Beef LLC.

3201 Frederick Ave. • Saint Joseph, MO 64506-2997  
phone: (816) 383-5200 • fax: (816) 233-6575  
office hours: (M-F) 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (Central time)  
Web site: [www.angusbeefbulletin.com](http://www.angusbeefbulletin.com)

Staff are listed by name, phone extension and e-mail prefix. All direct phone numbers are "(816) 383-5..."; all e-mail addresses are "...@angusjournal.com"

**General manager** – Terry Cotton, 214, tcotton

**Editorial Department**

**Editor** – Shauna Rose Hermel, 270, shermel;  
**Assistant editors** – Corinne Blender, 277, cblender; Stephanie Veldman, 215, sveldman;  
**Artists** – Christy Benigno & Mary Black;  
**Proofreader** – Lucille Standlee

**Field editors**

**Eric Grant**, PO Box 296, Oak Creek, CO 80467, (970) 736-0580, wahoo\_eg@yahoo.com; **Janet Mayer**, 259 Mile Hill Rd., Johnstown, PA 15909, (814) 322-4687, jmayer5013@aol.com; **Becky Mills**, Rt.1, Box 414, Cuthbert, GA 31740, (912) 732-6748, lovettmills@alltel.net; & **Troy Smith**, HC 72, Box 18A, Sargent, NE 68874, (308) 527-3483; wordsmith@nctc.net

**Contributing writers**

Grady Bishop, Rod Fee and Jerilyn Johnson

**Advertising/Production Department**

**Manager** – Cheryl Oxley, 216, coxley;  
**Advertising assistants** – Doneta Brown, 289, dbrown; & Rich Masoner, 223, rmasoner;  
**Production assistant** – Carol Beckett, 226, cbeckett; **Advertising artists** – Monica Ford, & Julie Seitz-Aud; **Advertising proofreader** – Jacque McGinness

**Special Services Department**

**Coordinator** – Sharon Mayes, 221, smayes; **Artist** – Janet Herkelman; **Assistant** – Vickie Whitsell;  
**Proofreader** – Linda Robbins

**Web Marketing Department**

**Director** – Angie Stump Denton, 211, astump;  
**Assistants** – Abra Ungeheuer, 239, abra; & Tanya Peebles, 234, tpeebles; **Artist** – Ray Palermo

**Photo Department**

**Coordinator** – Donna Conley, 217, dconley;  
**Digital imaging specialist** – Kathrin Gresham

**Circulation coordinator** – LaVera Spire, 220, lspire

**Network systems coordinator** – Bruce Buntin

**Office assistant** – Lauralee West

**Angus Productions Inc. Board of Directors**

**Chairman** – Steve Brooks;  
**Vice chairman** – John Crouch;  
**President** – Terry Cotton;  
**Business manager** – Richard Wilson; Dave Smith; Ben Eggers; Abbie Nelson; Mark Gardiner; Brian McCulloh & Paul Hill

