



Scott Turpin (left) and his father, Billy Turpin, started buying better bulls with assistance of the federal tobacco buyout program.

TRADITION & TRANSFORMATION

Father and son progress toward premium Angus cattle.

Story & photos by Nicole Lane Erceg, Certified Angus Beef LLC

It was 1960 when Billy Turpin first began using Angus bulls in his Kentucky herd. Back then, cattle were just a sideline to the real farm income — tobacco. Those were the days when families could make a living off of a small number of acres, a few cattle and the cash crop.

The Turpin family has been farming in Madison County since the 1800s. The big, black tobacco barn still sits on their original property, but now it is surrounded by commercial Angus cattle. Billy and his son, Scott, were each vocational agriculture educators for decades, but now both farm together near Richmond, Ky., operating a herd of 120 Angus-based cows.

The federal tobacco buyout program that began in 2004 brought an end to their crop-farming days, but opened state opportunities to invest in better

cattle genetics. Through what is now the County Agricultural Investment Program (CAIP), Scott and Billy could afford higher-end bulls. The program requires cattlemen to invest in baseline or better expected progeny differences (EPDs) to receive payments that help in the continuing transition from tobacco fields to pastures. It also helped the Turpins invest in new handling facilities, allowing them to better care for their herd.

The father and son have been buying “upper-end bulls” for more than 15 years, but CAIP allowed

them to progress further, faster. They focus on balanced, profitable bulls and select traits using Angus dollar value indexes (\$Values) like beef value (\$B) and weaned calf value (\$W) to create good cows since they develop their own females.

The Turpins’ herd is entirely made up of females they’ve designed, since they haven’t bought a cow for nearly 20 years. To them, investing in the female is vital to a superior calf crop.

“You have to have the right female set behind them,” Scott says of his calves. “That’s the

reason we select the top bulls; and, with the right combination, we hope we can create a calf that’s great.”

Like most in the cattle business, they sell by the pound, but have always focused on ways to provide added value. Their goal is to be a supplier of a premium product, like the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand, for the end consumer.

“There is a place for commodity cattle,” Billy says, “but there’s a place for upper-end cattle, too.”

His son adds, “We’d rather be on the premium end than the commodity end.”

Forage-based

For the Turpins, superior cattle must have quality forages. In 2001, when Billy retired from teaching, he began to put an emphasis on

updating their farm, starting with the grass.

In the past, they relied mainly on cool-season grasses. Updated fencing, strategic water placement and the addition of grazing planted summer annuals changed their operation. Using a rotational grazing system, they increased stocking rates by 25%, and they don't supplement forages until after the first of January.

Good nutrition is just part of the recipe for success. The duo focuses on keeping a consistent health program, too.

Their calves are marketed through Certified Preconditioned for Health (CPH-45) sales, another successful Kentucky program, typically bringing at least 10¢ per pound above the average market.

Down the line

The cattle market is volatile, and 10¢ doesn't always add up to the dollars they know their cattle are bringing the next customers along the production chain.

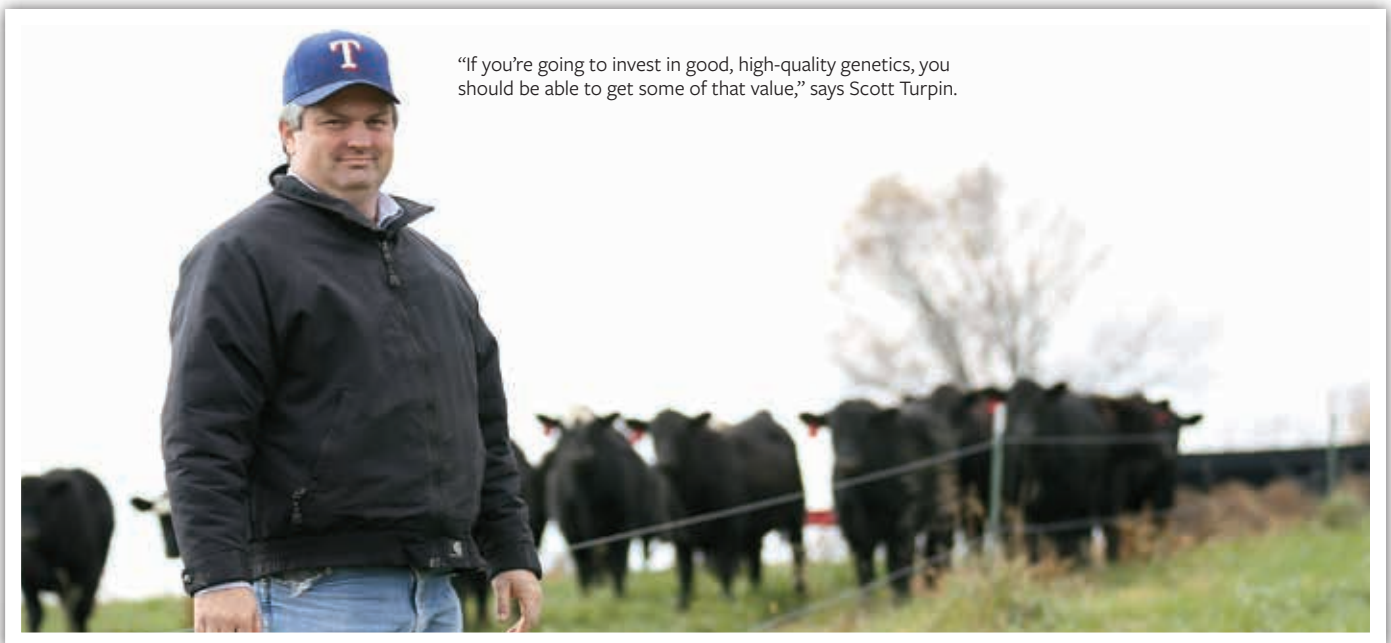
"If you're going to invest in good, high-quality genetics, you should be able to get some of that value," Scott says. "I know there's a lot of value in these cattle that we never get to see."

They've always wanted to feed out their own calves to see that value, how they perform beyond their Kentucky pastures, but delayed cash flow held them back from retaining ownership.

"We want to be able to capture the true value of the genetics we've invested in," Billy says. "To do that, we need to hang them on the rail and see what they're worth."

For their 2017 calf crop, the Turpins were finally ready to find out. Partnering with other local Angus producers, they sent some of their calves to Pratt Feeders in Kansas. It's the opportunity to discover whether they've been making the right choices all along.

"I'm excited to see how they perform," Scott says. "We'll get a



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lot of data back and be able to see where we're at."

Though hopes are high, the numbers will tell the story. If the feeding and harvest data are positive, they'll look to market more calves on their own. If the numbers don't meet their expectations, they are prepared to make necessary changes to improve their end product.

For the future, they have their sights set on premium performance.

"It's always *Certified Angus Beef* Prime on the radar," Scott says, and producing as much of it as possible. They added another 75 acres of pasture to the farm this year as they work to expand their herd.

Yet at the end of the day, it's farming with family, a tradition that touches on three centuries for the Turpins, that is the true passion for these two Kentucky cattlemen.

"The past five years we've just farmed together, I wouldn't trade anything for it," Scott says. "We just love learning more about this business, what we can do better and doing it together." ■

Editor's note: Nicole Lane Erceg is a producer communications specialist for Certified Angus Beef LLC.

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— Billy Turpin



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EZAR RAINMAKER 7046
Born 1/31/17 • Sire: Basin Rainmaker 4404
MGS: V A R Discovery 2240

CED	BW	WW	YW	Milk	CW	MA	RE	\$W	\$B
+10	+1.2	+77	+137	+25	+66	+92	+69	+77.89	+185.89



EZAR GENERATION 7130
Born 1/3/17 • Sire: V A R Generation 2100
MGS: GAR-EGL Protege

CED	BW	WW	YW	Milk	CW	MA	RE	\$W	\$B
+1	+2.4	+72	+124	+18	+59	+69	+95	+60.20	+191.36



EZAR UPWARD 7250
Born 3/4/17 • Sire: Sitz Upward 307R
MGS: A A R Ten X 7008 S A

CED	BW	WW	YW	Milk	CW	MA	RE	\$W	\$B
+11	+1.6	+78	+145	+38	+81	+69	+93	+81.62	+191.94



EZAR PAYWEIGHT 7023
Born 1/8/17 • Sire: Basin Payweight 1682
MGS: A A R Ten X 7008 S A

CED	BW	WW	YW	Milk	CW	MA	RE	\$W	\$B
+8	-1.9	+54	+102	+34	+47	+82	+48	+69.09	+153.26



EZAR PAYWEIGHT 7197
Born 2/6/17 • Sire: Basin Payweight 1682
MGS: PA Power Tool 9108

CED	BW	WW	YW	Milk	CW	MA	RE	\$W	\$B
+5	+1.3	+64	+117	+27	+52	+59	+82	+68.86	+169.66



EZAR PAYWEIGHT 7217
Born 2/17/17 • Sire: Basin Payweight 1682
MGS: A A R Ten X 7008 S A

CED	BW	WW	YW	Milk	CW	MA	RE	\$W	\$B
+10	+1.2	+80	+143	+30	+66	+1.11	+1.10	+86.52	+181.27



EZAR GENERATION 7143
Born 1/10/17 • Sire: V A R Generation 2100
MGS: GAR-EGL Protege

CED	BW	WW	YW	Milk	CW	MA	RE	\$W	\$B
+3	+2.9	+67	+124	+10	+54	+56	+80	+41.50	+174.30



EZAR ADVANCE 7182
Born 1/27/17 • Sire: Basin Advance 3134
MGS: Summitcrest Complete 1P55

CED	BW	WW	YW	Milk	CW	MA	RE	\$W	\$B
+8	+8	+69	+119	+41	+50	+1.20	+66	+84.56	+168.73



EZAR RAMPAGE 7385
Born 4/7/17 • Sire: Quaker Hill Rampage OA36
MGS: A A R Ten X 7008 S A

CED	BW	WW	YW	Milk	CW	MA	RE	\$W	\$B
+0	+4.2	+80	+135	+22	+68	+71	+89	+69.81	+186.62

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