

NACC Champions Named

Alabama, Nebraska, Iowa, Texas top NACC.

Story by
STEVE SUTHER

The grand champion pen in the 2006 National Angus Carcass Challenge (NACC) was a record-setting group of 68 steers from Iowa's Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity (TCSCF). They were fed at Ron Barrier's Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB)-licensed Rolling B Farms, Neola, Iowa, on behalf of TCSCF cooperators in Alabama and Georgia.

Harvested May 31 and July 6 at the Tyson Foods plant in Denison, Iowa, the steers achieved 61.8% *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand acceptance, including 11.8% Prime. The trick was putting that together with 67% Yield Grade (YG) 1 or 2 leanness, no discounts, and a 754-pound (lb.) carcass weight. The combination made for a record \$108.77 per hundredweight (cwt.) on the NACC contest grid.

Most of those steers trace ownership or genetics to Rocky Creek Farms, owned by Billy Womack, Ashford, Ala. Womack gives Iowa State University beef specialist Darrell Busby and TCSCF management half of the credit.

Besides CAB, NACC sponsors joining forces to help producers discover the value in their Angus cattle were Allflex USA, Alltech, *Drovers* magazine, Merial, ORigen and the American Angus

Association's AngusSource® program, a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Process Verified Program (PVP). The annual contest began in 2003 and concluded with the 2006 results.

The competition was greater

Groups of at least 38 steers or heifers sired by registered Angus bulls were fed in CAB-licensed feedlots. "We harvested about 5,600 cattle this year," said Mark McCully, NACC coordinator and CAB director of supply development. "That was 1,300 head fewer than last year, but the competition was greater." One measure is the number of pens finishing more than \$4 per cwt. above the \$100 base. There were 28 of those pens in the 2006 contest, compared to 16 in 2005, 11 in 2004 and four in 2003.

McCully announced winners Jan. 13 at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver, Colo., where Busby accepted the \$5,000 NACC check on behalf of the producer group, and another \$1,000 for producers in seventh-place TCSCF showings in the steer and heifer divisions. Penmates to Womack's steers came from Charles Conklin's Home Park Farm, Thomasville, Ga.; Terry Harris, Boston, Ga.; Mike Davis' Prairie Cattle and (James) Shand & Shand, all of Marion Junction, Ala.



The grand champion pen in the 2006 NACC was a record-setting group of 68 steers from Iowa's TCSCF fed at Ron Barrier's Rolling B Farms, Neola, Iowa, on behalf of TCSCF cooperators in Alabama and Georgia. Pictured at the awards ceremony are (from left) Ty Groshans, American Angus Association; Turk Stovall, ORigen; Van Ricketts, Merial; Ron Barrier, Rolling B Farms; Amber Tjernagel, Alltech; Kathy LaScala, *Drovers*; and John Stika, CAB.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOHN MADAX, DROVERS

The champion heifers were owned and fed by regular NACC notable and veteran CAB partner Beller Feedlots, Lindsay, Neb. Sired by SAF Hi Road and Hoff's Hi Spade, the pen came in second overall in grid value, at \$107.62.

"They did not stand out for highest quality grade, at 47.2% CAB and Prime, but they were the most uniform cattle we've ever seen in the NACC," McCully said. There were no discounts, and

97% of them hit the NACC premium carcass weight range of 750 lb. to 849 lb., harvested at Cargill Meat Solutions in Schuyler, Neb.

Brothers Terry and Mike Beller bought from Jim Skavdahl of Crawford, Neb., a steady source of quality during the past six years. In fact, heifers from Skavdahl made up the reserve and third-place heifer pens in the 2005 NACC with cattle that

held the previous uniformity record, with 90% hitting the target window.

All were present in Denver when the Bellers accepted the check for \$3,000 for the champion heifer pen and another \$1,200 for fourth- and 10th-place heifers. They split another \$1,000 with Skavdahl for the partnered fourth-place steer pen. Skavdahl also won \$1,000 in semen credit from ORigen, which represents the featured sires used in the 1,400-cow herd.

ORigen awarded \$3,500 in credits overall to owners of the five champion-level NACC pens.

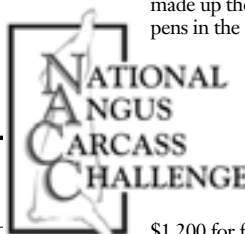
A feeding company sometimes called "the other Bellers" owned and fed the champion steer pen. Brothers Doug, Dennis and Duane Beller — who operate Beller Corp., just down the road from their cousins at Lindsay, Neb. — excel on their own merit. Last year marked the third time Beller Corp. bought steers from Ken Pelster, Bartlett, Neb., at an Elgin, Neb., auction.

It must have been a charm, because they made 82% CAB, including 28.2% Prime, and tallied \$107.12 per cwt. on the NACC grid when harvested July 14 at Cargill's Schuyler plant.

The first year of data convinced them to enter the AngusSource program steers in the NACC, Doug said. "From carcass to closeouts, we knew they were the kind of cattle that were going to do everything we needed."

Table 1: 2006 National Angus Carcass Challenge leader board, final standings

Placing	Grid value	% CAB	% Prime	% YG 4-5	Avg. HCW	No. head harvested	Participant/owner name and name of CAB-licensed feedyard where lot was fed
Grand Champion	\$108.77	50.0%	11.8%	0%	754	68	Steer pen from TCSCF — Rocky Creek Farms, Harris Livestock, Home Park Farm, Shand & Shand, and Prairie Cattle fed at Rolling B Farms
Steer division:							
Champion	\$107.12	53.8%	28.2%	10.3%	798	39	Beller Corp. fed at Beller Corp.
Res. champ.	\$106.97	44.4%	13.9%	0.0%	780	36	Mason Fleenor/GG Genetics fed at GG Genetics
3	\$106.31	73.7%	10.5%	5.3%	772	38	Bill Woods/Woodstone Angus fed at Cattleman's Choice Feedyard
4	\$106.29	45.9%	13.5%	5.4%	819	37	Beller Feedlots/Jim Skavdahl fed at Beller Feedlots
5	\$106.29	45.0%	0.0%	0.0%	754	40	Jim Gregory, James Washburn, David Trowbridge fed at Gregory Feedlots
6	\$106.08	50.0%	19.4%	8.3%	759	36	Mason Fleenor/GG Genetics fed at GG Genetics
7	\$105.68	46.8%	2.5%	0.0%	785	79	TCSCF fed at Nilan Feedlot
8	\$105.35	59.5%	5.4%	2.7%	818	37	Leland and Kevin Cain fed at Beller Feedlots
9	\$105.32	44.7%	18.4%	13.2%	771	38	Jimmy Thomas/Beller Feedlots fed at Beller Feedlots
10	\$105.15	36.6%	24.4%	9.8%	742	41	Mike Kasten fed at Irsik & Doll Feedyard
Heifer division:							
Champion	\$107.62	38.9%	8.3%	0.0%	813	36	Beller Feedlots fed at Beller Feedlots
Res. champ.	\$107.61	86.8%	7.9%	0.0%	682	38	Bill Woods/Woodstone Angus fed at Cattleman's Choice Feedyard
3	\$105.68	40.5%	21.4%	7.1%	727	42	Mason Fleenor/GG Genetics fed at GG Genetics
4	\$105.58	44.7%	2.6%	0.0%	771	38	Beller Feedlots fed at Beller Feedlots
5	\$105.13	18.9%	29.7%	10.8%	783	38	Mason Fleenor fed at GG Genetics
6	\$104.67	40.0%	7.5%	2.5%	767	40	Hones/Peterson Livestock fed at Darnall Feedlot
7	\$104.67	38.8%	2.0%	0.0%	776	49	TCSCF fed at Nilan Feedlot
8	\$104.61	26.3%	5.3%	2.6%	740	38	Cottrell & Painter Farms fed at Silver Creek Feeders
9	\$104.25	41.0%	5.1%	2.6%	769	39	Elmer Peterson/Peterson Livestock fed at Darnall Feedlot
10	\$103.63	22.7%	4.5%	9.1%	797	44	Beller & Friends/Beller Feedlots fed at Beller Feedlots



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The champion heifers in the 2006 NACC were owned and fed by Beller Feedlots, Lindsay, Neb. Pictured at the awards presentation are (from left) Turk Stovall, ORigen; Ty Groshans, American Angus Association; Kathy LaScala, *Drovers*; Van Ricketts, Merial; Terry and Carla Beller, Beller Feedlots; Amber Tjernagel, Alltech; and John Stika, CAB.



Doug, Dennis and Duane Beller of Beller Corp. won the champion steer pen with steers purchased from Ken Pelster. Pictured at the awards presentation are (from left) Dennis, Dean and Doug Beller, Beller Corp.; Ken and Carol Pelster, Pelster Angus Ranch; and Naomi Gray and Jeff Pelster, Gray's Angus.



The reserve champion pen of heifers by Woodstone Ranch set an all-time high of 94.7% CAB and Prime. Pictured at the awards ceremony are (back row, from left) John Stika, CAB; Turk Stovall, ORigen; Ty Groshans, American Angus Association; Van Ricketts, Merial; Kathy LaScala, *Drovers*; Amber Tjernagel, Alltech; Bill Woods and John Wiggins, Woodstone Angus; Dale Moore, Cattlemen's Choice Feedyard; and (front row) Will Woods, Woodstone Angus.



Mason Fleenor, Ida Grove, Iowa, won reserve grand champion steer pen with a group that made 58.3% CAB and Prime, reaching \$106.97 on the NACC grid. Pictured at the awards presentation are (from left) Ty Groshans, American Angus Association; Turk Stovall, ORigen; Van Ricketts, Merial; Diane and Mason Fleenor, GG Genetics; Amber Tjernagel, Alltech; Kathy LaScala, *Drovers*; and John Stika, CAB.

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Pelster manages more than 600 cows with other family members, weaning and preconditioning calves prior to the late-November sale. "We've been Angus for 55 years," he said, adding that they have been collecting individual weaning weights since 1958. Bulls come from three main suppliers: RRAM Livestock Inc. of Elgin;

Dethlefs Angus Ranch of Ravenna, Neb.; and Gray's Angus at Harrison, Neb. He watched in Denver as the Beller Corp. brothers collected a \$3,000 NACC bonus for believing in his cattle. Being the top-value AngusSource pen added \$1,000.

The most unusual cattle in the NACC made a stunning comeback in 2006,

setting an all-time high 94.7% CAB and Prime record. "If these 38 heifers, really the tail-enders from Woodstone Ranch, of New Ulm, Texas, had more size, they would have risen higher than reserve grand," McCully said. In fact, they were only a penny behind the champion pen on the NACC grid. Harvested in a single group at the Swift & Co. plant in Dumas, Texas, in November, carcasses weighed a

relatively light 682 lb., but there were no discounts.

Woodstone made news with NACC champion steers in 2004, and the ranch came back with third-place steers in 2006. Fed again at Cattlemen's Choice Feedyard, Gage, Okla., by managers Dale and Mary Moore, the calves came from a herd of Irish-origin cows that trace back to the very first registered Angus cattle.

Bill and Yvonne Woods keep half of their 500 linebred cows in Texas, the other half near Hackett, Ark., with managers John and Angela Wiggins. The Woods family accepted the \$3,500 NACC award for the two pens in Denver.

Mason Fleenor, Ida Grove, Iowa, still has everything clicking. His GG Genetics reserve grand pen of steers made 58.3% CAB and Prime, reaching \$106.97 on the NACC grid, harvested last spring at Cargill's Schuyler plant. He also had the sixth-, 11th-, 14th- and 15th-place steers, and the third-, fifth- and 18th-place heifer pens. His top two heifer pens went 61.9% and 48.6% CAB, including 29.7% Prime in the latter. In all, Fleenor collected \$4,800 from the NACC, and another \$750 in ORigen semen credit.

High quality grades are built in, Fleenor noted. "Our whole calf crop is in the top 10% for IMF." Indeed, no other feedlot or farm in the four-year history of the NACC can match his top nine groups over time. They have made 59.7% CAB and Prime with an NACC grid average of \$105.85 per cwt., including grand champion pens in 2003 and 2005.

To round out the top steer pens, Jim Gregory and feedlot manager David Trowbridge, Tabor, Iowa, partnered with longtime customer James Washburn of King City, Mo. The 40 steers were 45% CAB and 70% YG 2 with no outliers, resulting in a contest grid score of \$106.29 per cwt.

None of the top winners were Merial SureHealth®-certified, so no bonus was awarded. Besides the award to Beller Corp. on the Pelster cattle, another AngusSource bonus of \$1,000 went to Beller Feedlots and partner Jimmy Thomas, Homedale, Idaho, for their ninth- and 13th-place steers, second- and third-high-value in that program.

Allflex offered free AngusSource tags for up to 50 head per entry in the 2006 NACC, which introduced radio frequency ID (RFID) as a demonstration. Allflex also supplied early enrollees and owners of 2005 winning pens with matched-pair sets of visual ear tags and RFID buttons.

Although there is no NACC for 2007, the network of CAB feedlot partners remains committed to helping Angus producers with postweaning value discovery. In addition, 20 or more state or regional feed-out programs are available through state Extension beef specialists and Angus associations. For a list of those feedlots and state programs, visit www.cabpartners.com, e-mail info@certifiedangusbeef.com or call 1-877-241-0717.