



# Show-Me Surprises

*Producers find more options and opportunities with registered Angus.*

*Story by*  
**BROOKE BYRD**

Angus heifers were in high demand at the Show-Me Select Replacement Heifer Program fall auction at the Joplin Regional Stockyards, Carthage, Mo. A record average price was set at \$1,397 for the spring-calving heifers in the program, a \$323 increase from the previous record of \$1,074 set in fall 2003.

Four registered Angus heifers, consigned by Carrier Farms, Lockwood, Mo., and bred to Connealy Lead On, brought the highest average price of \$1,700 apiece. The only registered heifers at the all-breed sale that day, the females created a great amount of interest before the sale.

"In the past I might not even have a soul that would call wanting to know about registered heifers,

and this time we did have several," says Eldon Cole, University of Missouri (MU) Extension livestock specialist and sale coordinator. "There did seem to be a true interest in the registered heifers.

"There's a different type of clientele out there at these Show-Me sales. They definitely are more interested in performance, it seems, and in this case were interested in getting some heifers with papers on

them," he explains. "These folks just thought that this was an opportunity to buy heifers that had a good bit of information about them and took advantage of that."

Even though the Show-Me sales predominantly offer commercial, crossbred females, Cole says they usually have a few registered offerings. However, none have brought as much interest as this group.

**Realizing options**

"The fact that they were registered definitely added to the price," Cole says. "Any registered animal is probably going to give you more unlimited opportunities to make some money out of them on down the road."

Cole says many of the people who contacted him were newcomers to the cattle industry and were looking for the best way to start. "When they think of what is the very best, they think of purebred, registered seedstock," he says. "They look at the challenge of raising seedstock as something they would like to embark on and consequently use this as an opportunity to go in that direction."

One of those interested in starting a herd was the Dallas County R-1 School District's vocational agriculture program in Buffalo, Mo. Gary Nailer, MU Extension livestock specialist, spotted the Carrier heifers as a good start for populating the school farm, but the school's budget wasn't enough to buy them.

"We recognized that the pedigree was worth something in future marketability, and we recognized that the Angus breed is very popular," Nailer says. "It was an opportunity to get into the business."

He says registered Angus cattle would also provide the school with more options. "If you've got commercial, your options with the bull calves are steers," he says. "With these, we could either steer them and show them as purebred steers, or . . . keep them as bulls and maybe sell them at a tested bull sale."

Nailer explains that registered animals would provide the students with more learning opportunities. "Number one, they'd learn how to register them," he says. "They'd probably take weights on the calves, go through a vaccination program and artificially inseminate them."

The buyer of the Carrier heifers, Murl Wallis, Jenkins, Mo., made the decision to move away from commercial cattle to registered. The options and value associated with a registration paper were the main selling points. "It gives me two or three different ways to go in selling my calves. I can sell registered bulls that way," he says. "There is always a good market for them, and it's a much higher market than what you would get if you were selling just for beef price."

Wallis also recognizes the value of registered females. "We can roll them into the herd, roll old cows out at the bottom end and keep a young herd that way, or we can breed those and turn them back into the Show-Me Select program."

Of the heifers he just purchased, Wallis says, "I had to pay a pretty good price for them, but I'm not disappointed in that. I think I'm going to be very pleased."

**Registering demand**

Cole believes registered animals will continue to gain in popularity. "I would

say that when our May sale comes around we'll have several people wanting to put some registered heifers in," he says. "We may see this develop as more of a marketing opportunity for smaller registered breeders. I would certainly think that would be a good opportunity for them to get their names out in front of the public."

For those buyers interested in registered animals, Cole says, "Some people might say the sky's the limit if I happen to hit it just right with some good matings. I may get way more than my money back on them as a result of making that investment. That's the opportunity."

After buying his first registered Angus females, Wallis thinks just that.

"You have to spend a little more to get into the black Angus program to start with," Wallis says, "but once you're in there, the money's compensated for in the higher prices for the product."

