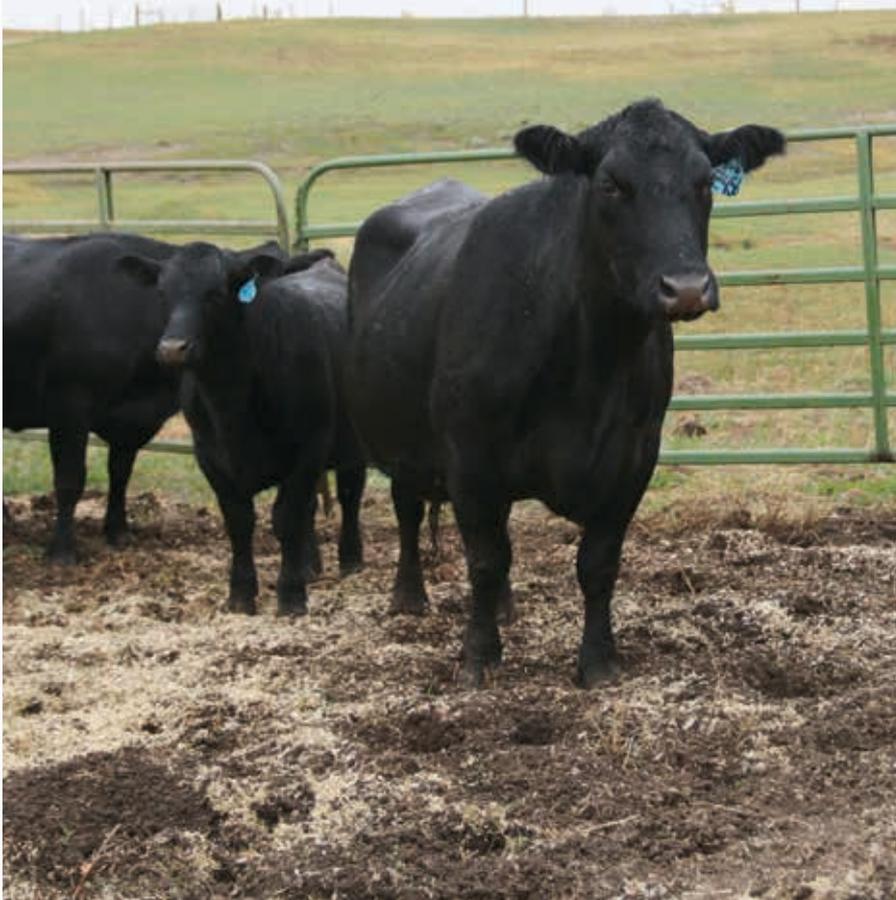


Montana Welcome

Central Montana Angus Association
hosts successful state tour.

Story & photos by **Kurt Kangas**, American Angus Association



The 2016 Montana Angus Tour, hosted by the Central Montana Angus Association, ventured to the geographical center of the state, with Lewistown serving as the base. Roughly 325 people representing 23 states and Canada spent three days and traveled 381 miles to visit some of the best Angus ranches in Judith Basin and Fergus counties.

The opening event teed off at 9 a.m. Tuesday morning as 16 teams battled for glory in the Montana Angus Tour Golf Tournament in Lewistown. Partly cloudy skies and

temperatures in the low- to mid-60s brought to mind the saying from *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, “Not too hot. Not too cold.” Once golf concluded, the tour was on.

Participants registered at the first stop, the Central Montana Fairgrounds, where lunch was catered by Tall Boys Tavern of

Hobson. Col. Roger Jacobs introduced Heart K Angus of Lewistown, Linhart Angus of Lewistown, and Reisig Angus of Hardin, who brought a good combination of bulls and heifers representing the breeding philosophies and direction of their programs.



As afternoon turned to evening, people migrated to the Yogo Inn for the Montana Angus Annual Meeting and Banquet. As the sun set in the part of Montana that gave Charles M. Russell inspiration for the majority of his paintings, 368 people enjoyed a Certified Angus Beef® (CAB®) brand prime rib dinner while listening to Kyle Shobe and the Walk 'em Boys Band.

Shobe emceed the evening's meeting, with updates from Montana Angus Association entities and a presentation by Kara Lee of Certified Angus Beef LLC.

Rough weather

A gentle rain fell as participants who so desired clambered onto the “Barney Bus” the next morning. The 1950s-era touring bus was complete with poker and dice tables. Leather seats completed the ensemble. Rain continued to fall as the other buses arrived and people loaded up to depart for the first stop of the day.

Hilltop Angus, located 10 miles to northeast of Denton, was the first stop. Cory and Tammy Poser, Gary and Carmen Poser, and the crew had an outstanding stop that featured many calves out of their most dominant sires. With weaning close at hand, participants were able to see a lot of pairs, along with herd sires that Hilltop has used in its program. Breakfast burritos served by the Hilltop crew warmed the hands and stomachs.

The weather continued to be uncooperative, and our stop at Dvorak Angus, at the base of the Snowy Mountains, had to be canceled due to poor road conditions. Ron and his daughter, Cathy, manage a straightbred Angus commercial herd and market their calves on the Corn Belt Classic Superior sale in June each year. While being a commercial operation, Ron and Cathy are involved heavily in the Central Montana Angus Association, buying top-end bulls from several registered outfits. Their



Printing. Gerri Campbell and her crew produce a top-notch product and gave producers attending the tour some insight into what goes into creating their sale books. They also sponsored breakfast at Tall Boys Tavern in Hobson. An outstanding breakfast of CAB country-fried steak, biscuits, scrambled eggs and gravy was a standout on the tour for meals.

Gaugler Angus was the next stop. Located in Judith Gap, the Gauglers know what it's like to face wind. One of the state's largest wind energy plants is located just a few miles from

calves sell off the cow at 750-800 pounds (lb.), a testament to their management and the power of the grass in Central Montana.

The next stop was at Mack Angus, 20 miles east of Lewistown. Eric and Christine, and Ed and Sue Mack welcomed tour participants. Cattle on display represented the progeny of bulls they have utilized in their ranch operations. Mack Angus sells their bulls private treaty in the spring. The Macks also manage a group of commercial cows whose calves are marketed through Northern Livestock Video & Lewistown Livestock.

Once again, the weather did not cooperate for our stop at Rockin' L Genetics, northeast of Lewistown. JR, wife Katie and crew called

an incredible audible, moving their tour stop to the nearby town of Grass Range. Though the cattle trailers didn't make it, the Lunds hosted a great lunch in what can best be described as a small community pulling together to help out.

From Grass Range the tour headed east to the small town of Winnett, where the local stockyard hosted the Gardner Angus stop. Ray, Shari and their sons enjoyed hosting the tour-goers as their cattle looked great and, to everyone's relief, the rain stopped. The Gardners raise mainly commercial cattle, but they have a nice set of registered stock that function well in their environment.

As afternoon turned to early evening, the tour made the final turns to Arntzen Angus north of Hilger. As the buses disgorged their occupants one more time, the Arntzen family and crew had cattle and food waiting. Display groups were of sires used heavily in their herd and included large groups of pairs. Dinner rounded out the evening.

Finishing touches

As the buses arrived back in Lewistown the town put its best foot forward. Many local businesses stayed open late to allow tour participants to shop and enjoy the local flavor and hospitality. Despite the weather, attendees seemed to embrace one of Montana's truest sayings: "If you don't like the weather, wait five minutes."

As folks gathered in the lobby at 6:15 the next morning, the rain had resumed in earnest.

With true dedication, tour-goers once again boarded the buses to head out on the day's adventure.

The first stop was at Ballyhoo

their ranch. Prone to harsh winters and snow that falls sideways and drifts as opposed to falling straight down, the Gauglers have a set of cows that are adapted to their environment. Mark and Laurie, Mark's father Charles, and crew had a great display of herd sires with large groups of calves.

While some folks traveling ahead of the main tour group got a brief side tour of Gumbo Flats — and why it is called that, the main tour body traveled through the ghost town of Buffalo and headed north to Stevenson's Diamond Dot. Clint, Adana, their children and their crew welcomed attendees. Clint had the first 100 head in his fall sale on display along with several females.

With the clouds slowly beginning to lift, the tour made its way to Carr Angus, where they were hosted by Kyle, Clint and Valerie Carr. The Carrs had bulls and heifers on display that were out of some of the artificial insemination (AI) sires they used. Clint has the honor of being 2016's Montana Bale Trail hay sculpture champion.

The sun was beginning to shine as the tour reached Stevenson Angus, its final stop. Keith, Darrell, Bob, Jake and their spouses greeted the tour group with a great lunch and a great display of the bulls they were selling in November.

The grand prize — an all-expense-paid trip to the Angus Convention sponsored by Zoetis was awarded to Linda and Dale Elston of Washington.

Congratulations to the Central Montana Angus Association for hosting a great tour and a big thank you to all those who attended, sponsored and volunteered.

Next year's Montana Angus Tour will be Sept. 26-28, 2017, in southwest Montana. It will be based out of Bozeman.



Editor's Note: Regional Manager Kurt Kangas covers Region 10, including the states of Alaska, Montana and Wyoming.

