

Reformatted Bull Sale



PHOTOS BY JD ROSMAN & SHELBY METTLEN

All-new evening event attracts nearly 2,500 to celebrate Angus in the West.

by Jena McReil, digital editor

The national anthem echoed through the historic Stadium Arena during the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) as the crowd stood at attention and cowboy hats were drawn in tight. Rows of Angus breeders, commercial producers and stock show attendees filled every corner at the official start of the National Western Angus Bull Sale.

The all-new evening event hosted Jan. 11 by the American Angus Association was a celebration of the breed's impact on western ranching and a look to the future for quality genetics and beef production. Sponsored by Merial, the event combined the Association's annual bull sale with an Angus Foundation fundraiser.

"The new format for the National Western Angus Bull Sale is another step forward for the breed, for the Association, and it is something we are all very proud of," said Allen Moczygemba, American Angus Association CEO. "We want to celebrate our heritage and the expansion of Angus, yet look to our future and what is possible. Through events like this, our Association continues to grow in relevance and to connect with our

ultimate customer, commercial cattlemen."

The only sale managed by the membership organization, the National Western Angus Bull Sale is a longstanding tradition during the NWSS each January. Angus breeders from across the country travel to Denver to showcase their best genetics, and commercial producers shop for their next great herd sire.



► Association CEO Allen Moczygemba addressed a record-breaking crowd.

The Association was proud to offer the new venue in Stadium Arena, and the event was referenced as the largest cattle sale in the arena in recent memory, with nearly 2,500 people attending according to NWSS reports.

"It is a great pleasure for Merial to be the headline sponsor of this first-ever event with the American Angus Association and the Angus Foundation," said Richard Jenkins, Merial head of national accounts. "What excites me so much about it, and why Merial is involved, is the opportunity to promote the best that the beef breed has to offer."

Cattle producers of all types were invited to attend the evening's activities, which also included live entertainment by Texas country band Jake Hooker and the Outsiders, and plenty of delicious *Certified Angus Beef*[®] (CAB[®]) brand product. The event was made possible by allied industry partners Merial and Neogen GeneSeek Operations.

"The Angus Foundation is one of the top agricultural foundations in the country, and it does so many great things for research, education and youth," said Jim Gibb, Neogen GeneSeek Operations territory manager. "We truly believe in supporting that kind of an

Takes the Spotlight

activity, so it's just natural for us to be involved. It's a perfect fit."

Angus in the West

The history and heritage of the National Western is one many Angus families cherish.

The stock show dates back more than 110 years, and the Angus breed has been active for nearly 75 of those years. Stadium Arena was built in 1909, and much of its historic charm remains within the old beams and green chairs.

"It's important to remember why we came to Denver to begin with, which is to grow our presence in the West with commercial cattlemen, and that's what the National Western Angus Bull Sale continues to be," Moczygemba said. "We're taking our modern-day genetics and tying them back to the history of this great event."

The National Western Angus Bull Sale kicked off with the 2017 Angus Foundation Heifer Package, generously donated by the Stevenson family of Basin Angus Ranch near Joliet, Mont. Basin Lucy 6265 was in the spotlight, surrounded by members of the National Junior Angus Board (NJAB), as the crowded sale arena came alive.

The winning bid for this year's package was \$170,000 from Charles W. and Judy Herbster, Herbster Angus Farms, Falls City, Neb. This marks the fifth consecutive year that the Herbsters have purchased the elite female in support of Angus education, youth and research.

Up on the sale block, the Association's David Gazda, director of field services and bull sale manager, had a unique view of the audience for the evening's events.

"The crowd during the sale was unbelievable," Gazda said. "We had breeders



► **Above:** Jeremy Leister is one of dozens of cattlemen from around the country who participated in the show and sale for the National Western Angus Bull Sale.

► **Below:** Randy Stabler of Pleasant Valley Farm near Brookeville, Md., and his family (daughter Shelby is pictured) have attended the NWSS and participated in the bull sale for several years.



from throughout the country here on the seats. I think this, by far, would be a record number of people we've had in attendance for the bull sale."

The energy was high as the sale bulls entered the arena, starting with the grand champion Angus sale bull, DBR Take Notice, exhibited by Jake Barnes, Broken Arrow, Okla., earlier in the day.

The ringmen called out bids while the bulls were displayed on a large video screen, providing the perfect view from all sides of the arena. More than 300 active buyers were registered on-site, and many more participated online through LiveAuctions.tv.

Behind the sale arena, the Angus

bulls were on display and available for buyers to evaluate before entering the ring. At the final gavel drop, 45 lots averaged \$6,805 per head. The sale grossed \$306,250.

"The real value, the real endorsement of our breed is the participation you have from commercial cattlemen who attend each year and support this sale," Gazda said. "It's showing us that Angus cattle do work. There is a demand for them. We are producing a product that commercial cattlemen can merchandise, and merchandise for a profit."

Forward momentum

Randy Stabler from Pleasant Valley Farm near Brookeville, Md., and his family have been attending the National Western and participating in the bull sale for several years. He said the event is a wonderful opportunity to market their genetics.

"Being from the East Coast and the tiny state of Maryland, we come here to the heart of the livestock world and the beef business. We have more buyers here, and more numbers to enhance what we're trying to do in our marketing," Stabler said.

Oklahoma State University's Beef Herd Manager Jeremy Leister says they've been active in the National Western Angus Bull Sale for many years because of the added exposure they gain for their breeding program.

"Like years past, this year has been a wonderful experience," Leister said. "It's a wonderful set of breeders, and a really good set of cattle. It was nice to visit with other breeders and receive compliments on our bull. That makes us, as a program at Oklahoma State, look even better."

The National Western Angus Bull Sale is often considered the unofficial start to the bull sale season, as nationwide production sales fill the calendar for weeks to come. If the crowd in Stadium Arena is any indication, the Angus breed has much to look forward to in the months and years to come.

"While it's important to celebrate our past, it's even more important that we continue to look forward and keep our momentum going," Moczygemba said. "At the end of the day, we want to sell more cattle, and we want to make sure they're Angus cattle. We have the best breed in the world, and we need to continue to grow our market share."



► Texas Country band Jake Hooker and the Outsiders provided entertainment for the evening.