

One Man's Influence

by Diane S. Krause

Just imagine the many facets encountered in the field of agriculture, particularly in the beef industry (education and research, public affairs, communications and youth activities)! Most likely, over the past years these diversified areas have been touched by the knowledge and interest of Herman R. Purdy—as a noted cattle herdsman and manager, an excellent livestock judging coach, a successful purebred breeder, as well as a consultant and professor emeritus; even more notably, Herman has left his mark as a renowned cattle judge.

A native of Harris, Mo., Purdy stemmed from a noted beef cattle family (Purdy Brothers Shorthorns) and was reared on cattle farms in Missouri, Tennessee, Colorado, Iowa and Indiana. As a student at Ohio State University from 1938 to 1942, Herman's only ambition was to become a cattle herdsman and manager since his pride and joy was working with cattle. Purdy still admits, "I like to work with my hands more than anything else." While at college, he worked at the beef barns and competed on the livestock judging team, with the team placing second at both the American Royal and the Chicago International in 1941. Upon graduation in 1942 with a B.S. degree in animal husbandry, he accepted a position at Ohio State University in charge of the meats laboratory, and in 1945, he was placed in charge of the university's beef herds and livestock judging teams.

The first year Herman coached, his team placed first at the International. Several team members on that 1946 nationally recognized team are now prominent figures in the livestock industry. They include Scott French, Don Good, Harold Hiner, Bob Long and George Wilson.

It was in 1954 that Herman Purdy became head of purebred livestock (cattle, horses, sheep and swine) at Pennsylvania State University. In addition, Purdy coached the judging teams. In 1958, he finished an M.S. degree in animal husbandry.

Herman continued to relate his judging ability and experience to his students as he coached the first place team of the 1966 International at Chicago. Fred Garrison, Jim Males, Bill Rishel and Gene Sweigard were members of that PSU team and all are presently involved with Angus cattle.

Under Herman's leadership as head of the pedigreed livestock program, Penn State showed more champion beef cattle, sheep, swine and horses than any other university. Throughout those years, Penn State showed a champion female and bull of every breed at the International with the exception of champion Angus bull. (Three times they showed champion Angus female and once they showed reserve champion bull.) Nevertheless, Herman has set a phenomenal record!

After 30 years of teaching, he retired. "The most enjoyment of teaching is to see your students do well—it's a reward, really." Some of his students that come to mind are Gail Long, Dick Sour, Bill Gray, Les Haller, Mick Colvin, Jim Gillooly, Ed Rishel, Glen Klippenstein, Dick Rishel, Tom Williams, Henry

Author Diane Krause (former National Angus Queen and presently a student at Pennsylvania State University) outlines the life of Herman Purdy—a name familiar to all in the purebred beef business. Most noted for his talents as a livestock judge, Purdy has influenced not only the lives of many students, but has also had a dominant role in changes in the industry.

Bergfeld and John Whiting. Presently, Purdy spends his time judging, consulting and going to sales.

Purdy's interests in purebred livestock also encompass advising cattle operations in many states, including some belonging to Hollywood movie stars. Of considerable

interest is the fact that Purdy had a part in building up President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Angus herd on his Gettysburg farm.

After retirement in July of 1973, Herman applied his teachings to practical use on Huntingdon Farm, Alexandria, Pa. He and John Dawes are co-owners of the 142-acre farm, located in the midst of spring water streams and rolling hills of central Pennsylvania. The location is ideal. It is close to Penn State where Herman is furnished an office and part-time secretary for the rest of his life—a benefit of the professor emeritus status. On the farm, most of the hay is made which feeds 60 Angus cows in addition to five Polled Herefords and one Charolais.

Not only beef cattle bring royalty to Huntingdon Farms, but so do the Corgi dogs. The seed stock of Purdy's Pembroke Welsh Corgi herd was Bonnie (a first cousin to Queen Elizabeth's Corgi) who gave birth to 46 puppies. Although Corgi pups have been placed in homes all over the United States, the heaviest concentration of Purdy Corgis is centered in State College, Pa.

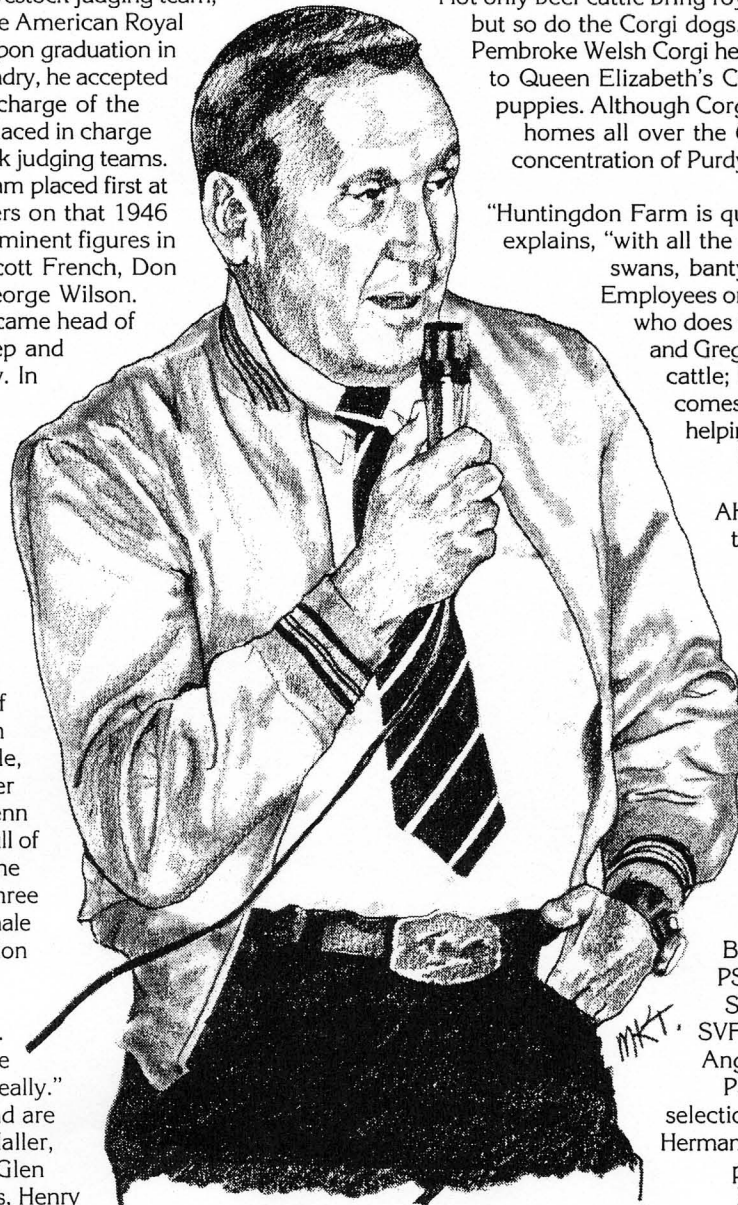
"Huntingdon Farm is quite a menagerie," Herman explains, "with all the cattle, dogs, doves, ducks, swans, banty chickens and peacocks." Employees on the farm are Tom Bowser, who does the farming and field work, and Greg Untied, who works with the cattle; however, when chore time comes, everyone chips in, lends a helping hand and works together.

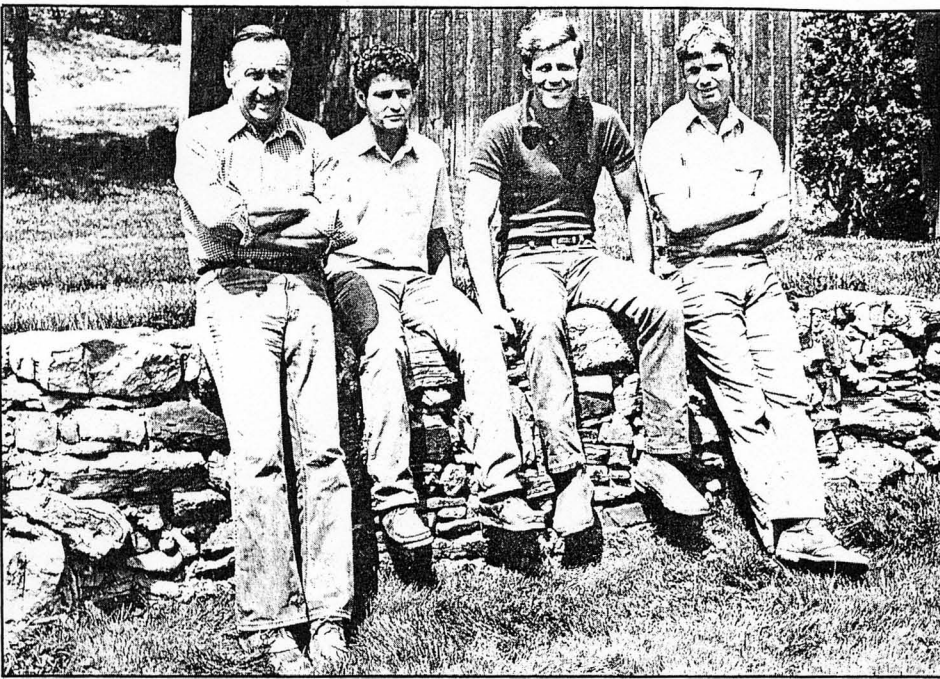
For constructive breeding, Herman leans strongly on AHIR: "Anybody to really get the most out of breeding and stay in the Angus business almost has to be on AHIR.

I believe in performance, too; I think the Sire Summary and Pathfinder Cows are useful tools."

This past year, Huntingdon Farm transplanted three cows. Most of his cows are bred by A.I. The remaining are bred by the clean up bull, HF Career. Continental,

Byergos Black Revolution 36, PS Power Play, Pine Drive Big Sky, Lovana, Foolish Pride, SVF Power Pack, Ken Caryl Mr. Angus 8017, Progression and PS Mastermind 908 are the selection of bulls used A.I. When Herman merchandises the cattle, he prefers private treaty sales; however, some are sold in





In addition to Purdy, the Huntingdon Farms crew includes Greg Untied, cattle herdsman; John Dawes, co-owner; and Tom Bowser, who is in charge of the farming and field work.

consignment sales in Pennsylvania and Maryland or in the annual Cow Power Sale.

As far as the type change taking place over the past few years towards longer, taller cattle, Purdy agrees the Angus breed is headed in the right direction: "We'll never go back to short, fat cattle. However, the biggest Angus cattle are big enough—I think we should put less emphasis on measurements and start concentrating on a little more correctness and some beefiness. We've reached our point in height." Some breeders may think the breed is getting too extreme in length and height, but Herman points out that many Angus cattle (not shown) could stand more length and elevation: "People going to shows only see a small percent of Angus cattle in the United States, and they get the idea that all Angus cattle are like that; however, they see only the very few that are a little far out."

"I'm sold 100 percent on Angus cows, because there's no beast in the world like the Angus cow. She calves easier, comes back and eats sooner, settles sooner, lives longer and milks longer." In addition, with the increase in size of these fast growing, lean Angus cattle, Herman feels Angus will be the predominant beef breed in years to come!

"I'm all for shows and showing," states Herman. "For the parents, it's the competition and satisfaction of seeing their children do well that makes shows worthwhile."

Revealing his expertise of judging, Purdy has more than 1,200 shows to his credit—with the majority being junior shows of 4-H and FFA cattle. He is always ready to answer questions and his advice and guidance has had an early influence on some of today's most prominent cattlemen. Purdy has judged in 46 states as well as in Scotland, England, Australia, Argentina, Canada, New Zealand, Costa Rica and Brazil.

Herman Purdy has judged 11 shows in Argentina which have included all breeds

(Angus, Charolais, Herefords, Polled Herefords and Shorthorns). Herman specifically recalls judging for the first time in Argentina: "I picked the bigger, leaner cattle. The people were upset and didn't understand why, so I had a seminar to explain my selections." Dawes adds, "Now they refer to the type change as 'before Purdy' and 'after Purdy.'" Cattle breeders across the nation have benefited from Purdy's 40 years of work as a live-stock judge.

Among the highlights in his judging career was judging the International at 26 years of age—the youngest person to ever judge that event. In addition, Purdy judged 927 bulls (in one day) at the 1959 Perth Angus Show and Sale in Scotland where he slapped Elevate of Eastfield, the \$75,000 bull, as grand champion. In 1961, he was the first person

to judge all three major beef breeds in one year in England; and in 1969, he was the second American ever to judge the Smithfield Fat Stock Show in London.

Purdy's philosophy to "change and keep current" has enabled him to remain world renown as a cattle judge for many years. Herman's proof of performance is whether or not he is offered an invitation to come back and judge again. He proudly admits, "I've always been asked back to judge a second time in all foreign countries." He holds the distinction of being the only person to judge every year at the North American International.

Attitude and honesty also play an important role in judging. "I never worry about judging: I just do as best I can. I also think 99 percent of the people (cattle breeders) are honest; therefore, I assume the cattle are pure and not over-aged."

Purdy feels oral reasons are important as long as they are basically constructive. As for the complainers which disagree with the official, the old cliché—it's easier said than done—applies. Purdy agrees, "People that criticize judges should just have to judge a show and they'd get over it."

Many times the top animals in a show are bought at high prices for breeding purposes, comments Purdy. Animals named grand champion, therefore, earn an outstanding reputation for the breeder. Small wonder that owners of prize stock sometimes, overzealously, question the judges' decision.

"Whenever someone comes to me after the judging is over and says angrily, 'Why did my animal place second?' I explain that I placed it over the third-place animal because it had certain characteristics which were better. No admissions that the second-place animal was nearly as good as the champion," says Herman.

By Herman's judging, consulting and past experiences, he has tremendously influenced breeders and cattlemen across the nation, which in turn, have contributed to the advancement of the Angus breed. **AJ**

Purdy now devotes a majority of his time to the cattle on his Huntingdon Farms near Alexandria, Pa. These bulls were sired artificially by some of the breed's most popular bulls.

