

## Louisiana's Oldest Operation Keeps Pace

# Elton Angus Farm

by Evelyn Wyble

Nearly 50 years of innovation and ambition have made the owner of Louisiana's oldest Angus operation one of the most progressive, productive and industrious breeders in the state.

Roy Bucklin, the established owner and manager of Elton Angus Farm, Elton, La., began his operation in 1936 with the eagerness and zeal to continually improve the herd. Together with his wife Effie, he has since not only increased cattle numbers but has significantly improved bloodlines within his herd. In the past two years, Bucklin has also successfully begun an embryo transfer program, thus further enhanc-

ing his half-century old Angus establishment.

Bucklin and his twin sister were the youngest in a family of 11 children. His father was a farmer, growing rice and other row crops, as well as raising commercial cattle. Roy, only 12 years old when his father died, was the only child to show an interest in cattle. However, his brother, Herbert, displayed a strong interest in the farming aspect. So together they took over the family operation, with Roy managing the cattle, as well as playing a strong role in the crop management.

Later, the two bought 411 acres of

what is now Elton Angus Farm. Upon his mother's death, Roy bought his brother's share of the new Elton farm, leaving Herbert to full management of the original family acreage.

In 1936, while entering the partnership with his brother, Roy began the Elton farm herd with two registered Angus heifers from R.W. Wright of Tennessee. "These were good, large-framed cattle for that time," Bucklin recalled, "and I bought them both for \$180 total."

A year later, a show heifer from L.R. Kershaw of Oklahoma was added to the herd. With a pleasing smile, Bucklin boasted, "She topped her class at the LSU Fall State Show (in Baton Rouge)." "That was an extremely big show back then," he added.

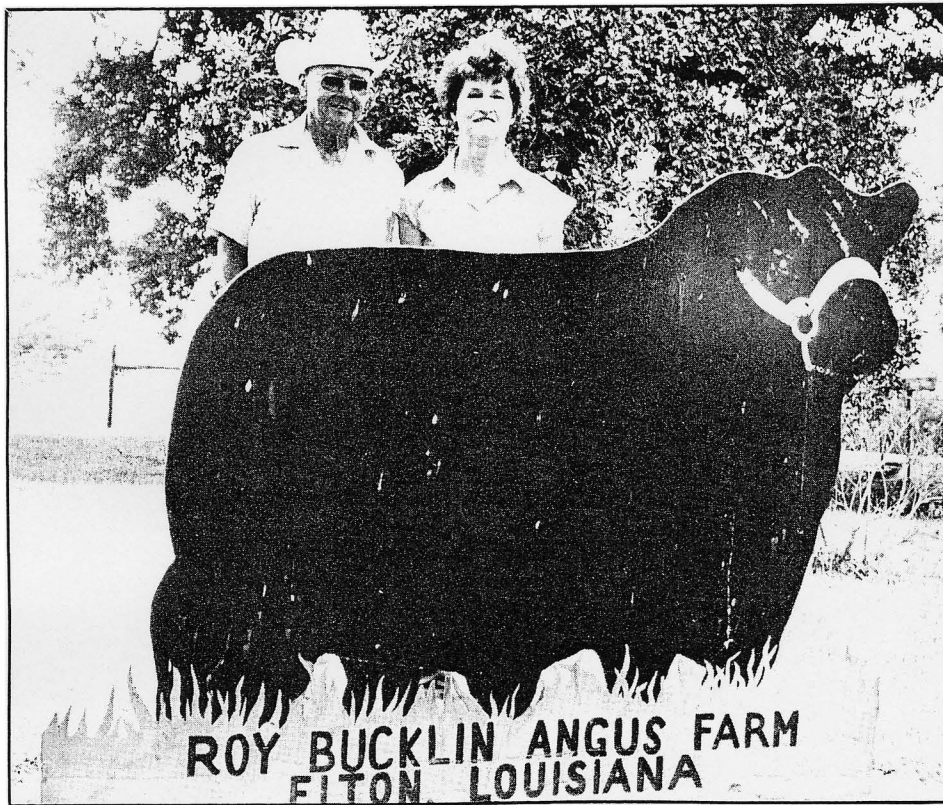
After 10 years in the cattle business and the use of A.R. McBurney's (Welch, La.) bulls to service his cattle, Bucklin ventured out to buy a herd sire for his cattle which then numbered 25 head. Purchasing a herd sire was a big step and an important decision for the eager cattleman, one which could be crucial in determining the success or failure of the operation.

### Early progress

"I bought a 14-month-old son of Black Prince from Sunbeam Farms for \$2,400. Sunbeam was a big name among Angus cattle breeders then," he said, and Bucklin felt that adding such a name and bloodline to his herd could only better his ever-growing and ever-improving group of cattle.

By 1949, the cattle industry was changing and Bucklin felt strongly about transforming his cattle operation as more modern demands dictated. It was then that the Louisiana breeder thought it necessary to sell both his grade and registered black cattle, buying 40 head of strictly registered Angus cows.

Within two years, he increased this number to 80 head and also added a young bull from Essar Ranch in San Antonio to the business. When purchased, Master Prince of Essar was too



Roy and Effie Bucklin proudly stand behind the official Elton Angus Farm sign. The bull, which stands in the front lawn of the Bucklin home, was made by a local art student 35 years ago and has never been repainted.

young to service his herd of 80 cows, making it again time to revolutionize the operation.

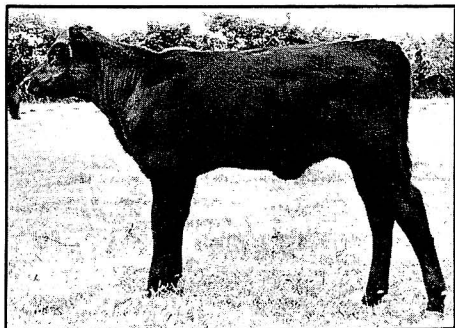
Bucklin decided it was necessary to utilize artificial insemination on his cattle, not only because of his new young bull, but "because things in the cattle business were changing so fast," Bucklin remembered. "By using A.I., I could vary my sires and change as I needed to." Most certainly, Elton Angus Farm was one of the first and few Louisiana beef operations at the time to utilize A.I.

### Family's success

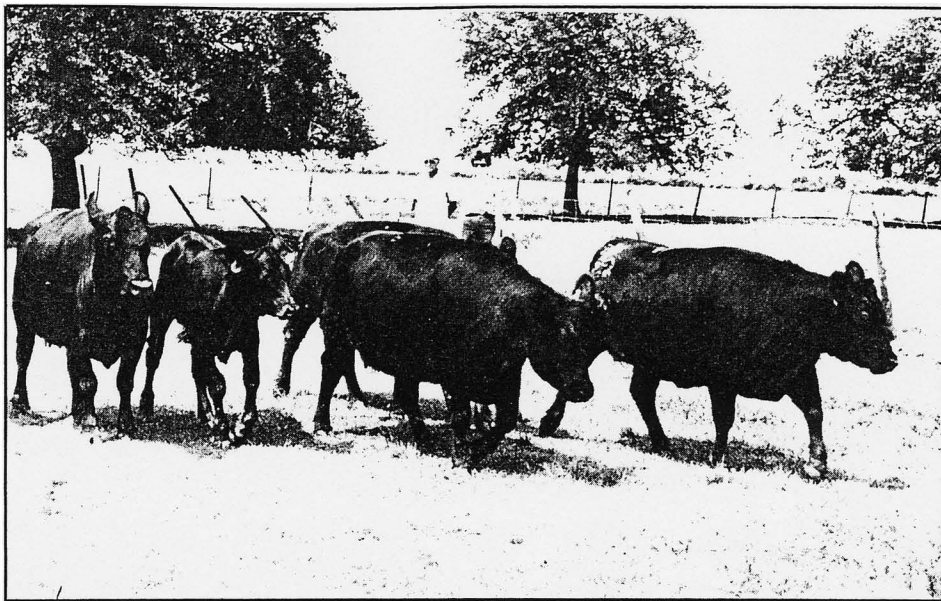
Bucklin's eyes and face glowed as he began to talk about his daughters Jeannette and Doris, the "pride and joy" of him and his wife. "My boys were girls," he said smiling, and their accomplishments ultimately played large roles in the success of Elton Angus Farm. During their years of showing Angus cattle (Jeannette beginning in 1956 and Doris following in 1960), the two accumulated more than 60 trophies, plaques and cups, all of which cover the walls of Bucklin's office.

As a firm believer in the show cattle industry, Bucklin worked hard with his girls, as well as other young 4-H and FFA participants, teaching them all the important aspects of showing cattle. After years of hard work and enthusiasm, the highlight of the Bucklin family show career took place at an LSU State Livestock Show when Jeannette won first place in the senior showmanship division and went on to win the overall showmanship title. Doris took the first place junior showmanship award, and both girls won a trip to Chicago with their steer projects.

Proud Dad laughed saying, "After the show, I had to buy a new hat—five of our six (home-bred) calves topped their class, and then both our girls won showmanship."



*This month-old heifer calf is one of several embryo transfer progeny on the Elton farm.*



*Bucklins have been striving to improve the Elton Angus herd since its start 50 years ago.*

### Continued interest in juniors

Jeannette, speaking proudly of her parents, says that no one deserves more credit than they do. "The livestock shows are still on their schedules, although Doris and I have been out of school 20 years. I doubt that anyone else does as much for 4-H and FFA youngsters as Daddy does.

"If you know him well enough, you know that he is the one who clips all the calves he sells for each show and is always there to witness the class just as if it were still Doris and I in the ring," Jeannette continued.

The Elton breeder is still, as Jeannette pointed out, very supportive of Angus juniors. He was the first state breeder to donate a heifer calf to the Louisiana Junior Angus Assn.

"When the junior association started out, they had lots of projects and no money to carry them through. Donating the heifer was a good way for the juniors to make money," he said.

Bucklin, still a strong supporter of the show industry, says, "There used to be—back in the '40s—a big difference between show cattle and performance cattle. Today, there's not much difference. Show cattle must perform." With this concept in mind, Bucklin not only raises cattle to perform, but cattle that can compete in the show ring as well.

In March of last year, Roy Bucklin was awarded the Historic Angus Breeder Award, one which acknowledges Angus breeders who have been in business 25 years or more. After raising Angus cattle for 49 years, Bucklin has nearly doubled this figure.

During this time, he has served approximately 30 years on the Louisiana Angus Assn. board of directors, and has held the president's gavel for two terms—1954-1955 and 1974-1975. He was also the first Louisiana breeder to be honored for outstanding Angus work, a program which began in the Louisiana Angus Assn. about 10 years ago. It is no doubt that Bucklin is a highly respected breeder and friend to Angus cattlemen throughout the state.

### Looking ahead

The beginning of a new era at Elton Angus Farm brings even more excitement into the already-thriving enterprise. Bucklin is making strong headway into his second year of an embryo transfer program, saying he can only feel optimistic about the results. He has been working closely with the University of Southwestern Louisiana in Lafayette, and even though it seemed to go a bit slow at first, Bucklin commented, the number of pregnancies has continued to increase since the program's beginning.

Bucklin now runs between 75 and 80 head of cows with no regular help, providing top-quality Angus cattle to surrounding commercial and purebred breeders alike. From the very beginning of the Elton farm, whether it consisted of only two head of cattle or 130 (as eight years ago), Roy Bucklin has been concerned with the constant improvement of the quality of his Angus cattle.

He has continued to climb the ladder of success, because he has never feared the concept of "change" and the results that change would bring. **AJ**