

“After all, what’s a steer good for?”

—By Jim Cotton, Editor—

Listing the merits and useful purposes of a steer doesn’t take long, most agree. David Brown of La-Grange, Ky., posed the above, commenting he’d never encountered a “registered” steer show lately but finds it a novel idea.

“I need something to do with my purebred steers,” Brown said. “I need a good market.”

Ah, yes... the market. Does one hit it with a good steer or a low-end bull? More on that question later.

The promise for extending those good Angus steers into something exciting became a reality for two youngsters recently at the 1985 North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE). They discovered just what a steer bull is good for.

For example, consider Christian Carmin, 14, of Logansport, Ind. His registered steer entry took overall grand champion steer, earning more than \$2,000 in premiums plus an additional 25 percent bonus premium as his animal qualified for Certified Angus Beef.

Close behind was Brian Finnestand, 13, from Belvidere, Ill. A 50 percent premium bonus was tacked on to his winnings by meeting CAB standards and being enrolled in the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) program.

The arena and occasion for all this was the American Angus Association’s first National Registered Angus Steer Show, Nov. 17, at Louisville, scene of the NAILE. It was certainly a bit historic, the baptism of its kind in the Angus division. While an initial lineup of 17 entries may not seem impressive, the potential for future growth may tax the imagination to say nothing of the management likely needed as registered steers clamor for the limelight.

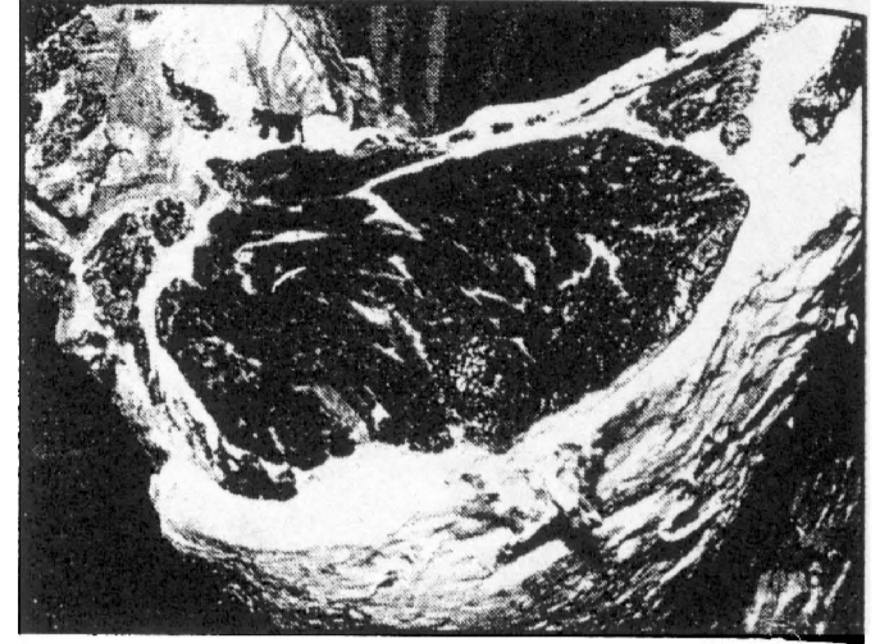
Painting the registered Angus steer as the Great Black Hope for the breed is inappropriate, sure, but there’s enough gilt-edge to the program to ensure more than just casual breeder involvement and interest.

The steer program was conceived as a means of raising the visibility of the Certified Angus Beef Program. Secondly, the educational value couldn’t be ignored.

“This show will let exhibitors see the similarities and differences between on-the-hoof and carcass,” says Mark Wyle, director of youth activities.

Third—just as Mr. Brown expressed—the registered steer represents another marketing opportunity for Angus breeders.

Dean Hurlbut, director of activities for the Association, points out: “If an



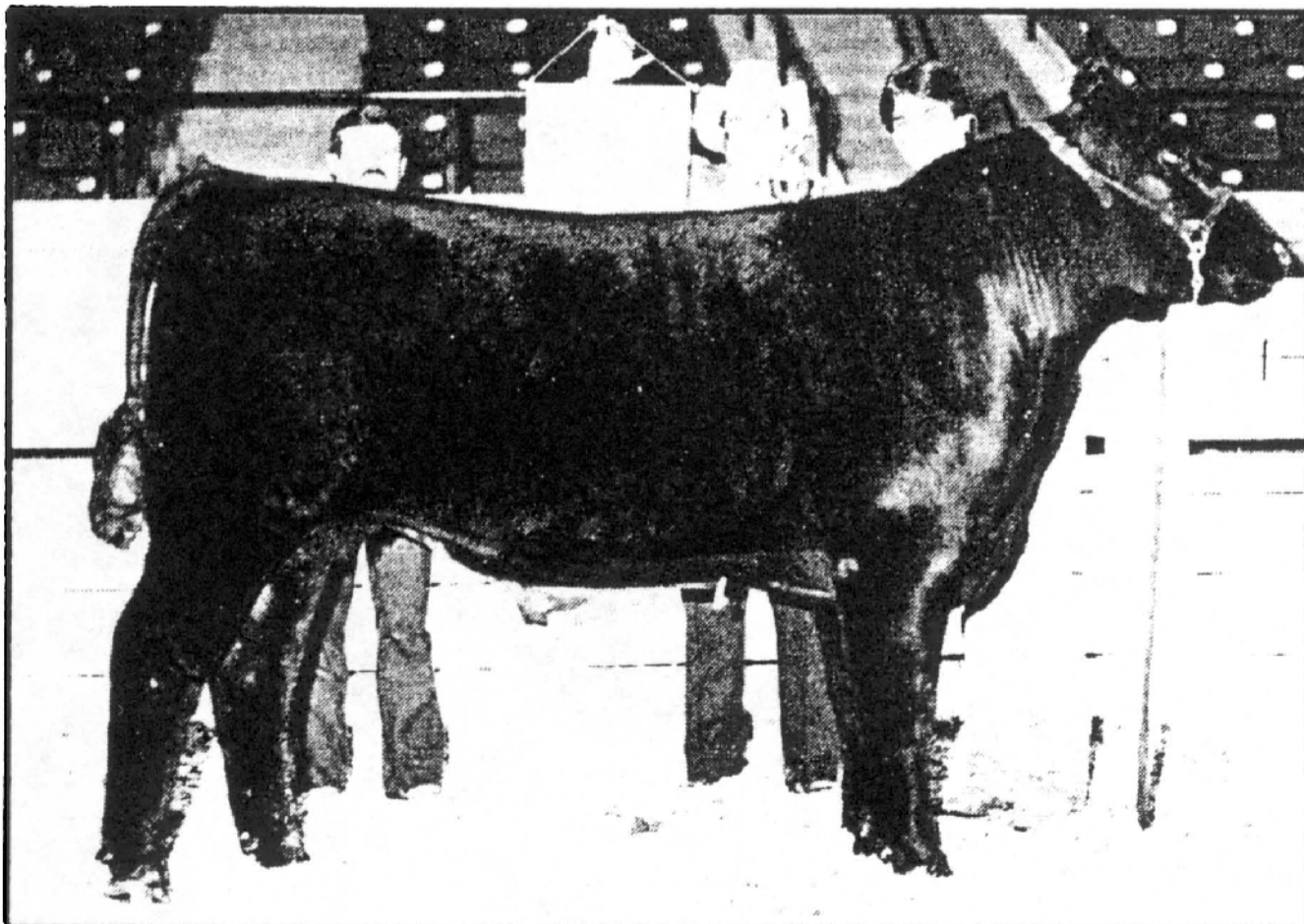
There were 17 entries in the NAILE debut. Scores were based on a 50 percent on-hoof placing, 50 percent carcass placing. Highest overall was a March 1984 son of Fairfield Hi Guy. Data: weighed 1,330 lb., 16.8-sq. in. ribeye, .2-inch backfat, 1.3 Yield Grade, High Choice. Christian Charmin of Logansport, Ind., entered the animal which placed seventh in the live show.

animal isn’t good enough for seed stock, breeders now have an out.”

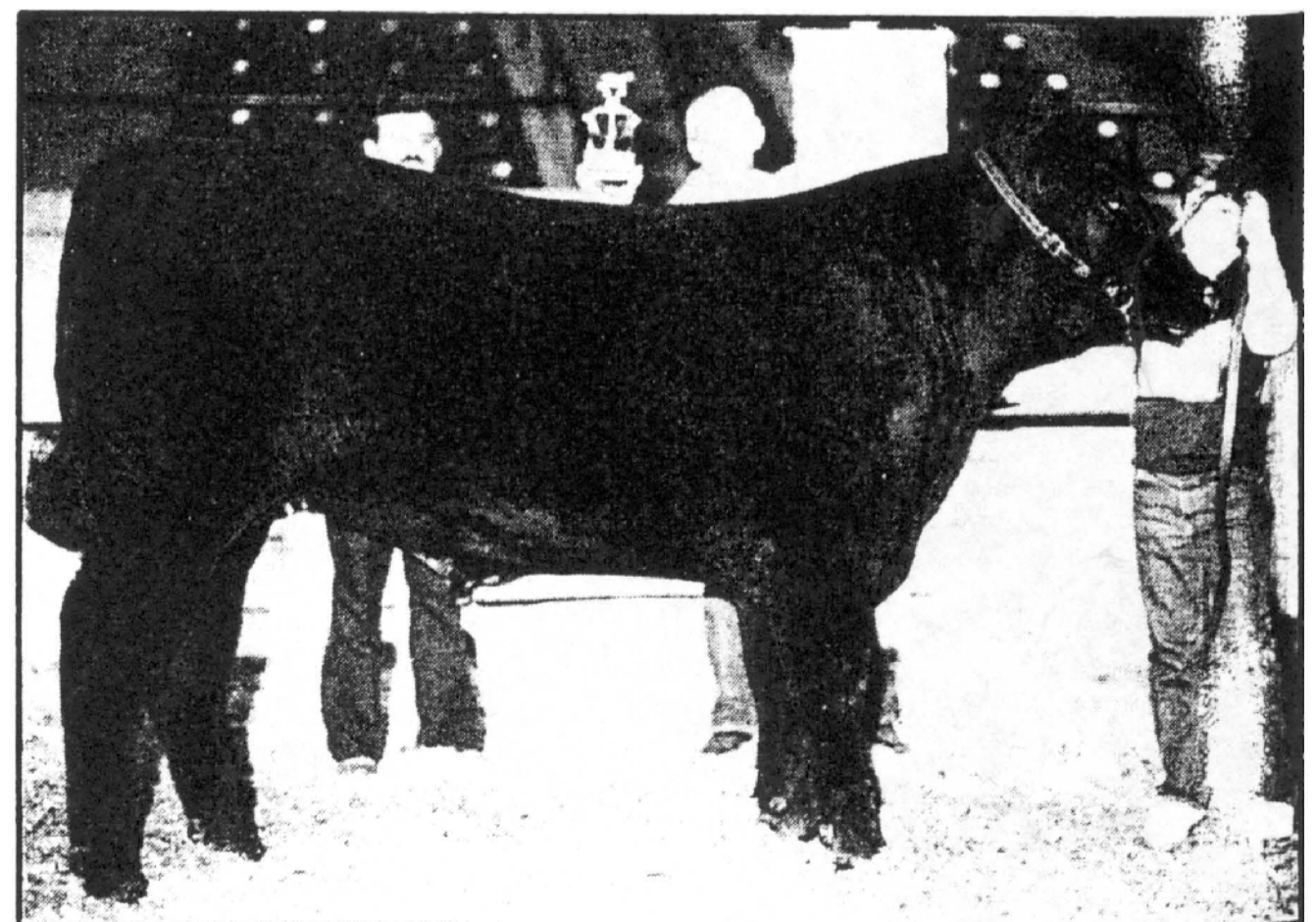
Hurlbut touches a nerve for most any breeder, any breed ponders what route for the borderline bull?

“Now, with this program, people have another merchantable product. They have problems selling all those registered bulls,” he adds.

Requirements for the new program? Each steer must be registered with the Association and be the offspring of a registered Angus sire and dam. Blood typing is mandatory on champion and reserve champion ani-



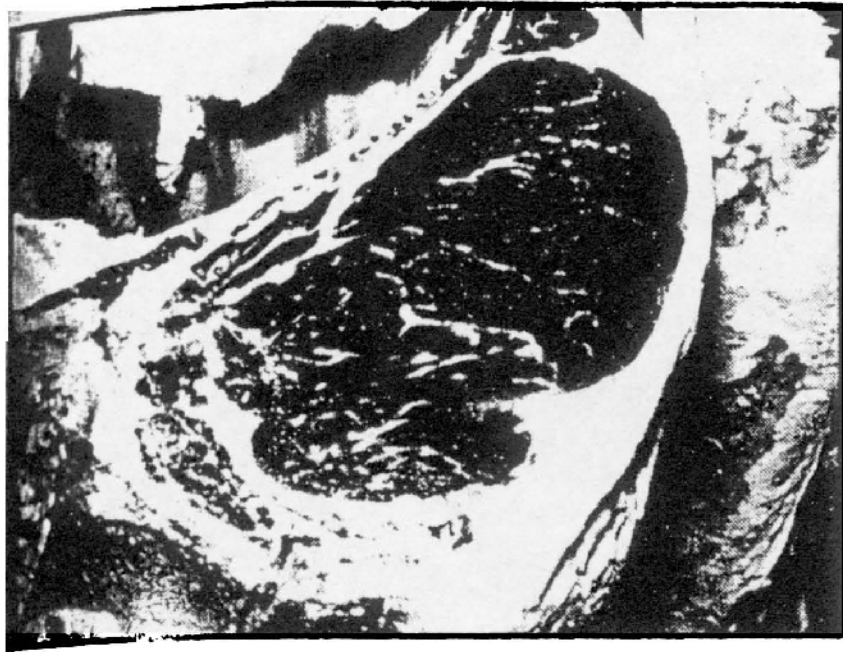
James C. O’Neill of Logan, Iowa, took this son of O’Neills Camelot to grand in the live placings. It placed third in the overall judging. It weighed 1,315 with a WDA of 2.13.



BTO Blackbeard 84 was the reserve champion in the live contest. Sired by Pine Drive Big Sky, it was shown by Drew Brown of Griffin, Ga. WDA was 2.38, 1,385 live weight.

mals, and all entries are subject to blood typing at the show and at the discretion of the American Angus Assn. Live, carcass, and overall scoring determines placings.

"The concept of a terminal steer show is becoming more popular throughout the nation as show man-



Judge of the show was Don Boggs of the University of Georgia. His sixth place steer was second in the carcass placing and also the overall. Brian Finnestad of Belvidere, Ill., was the owner and exhibitor. The steer weighed 1,450 lb. live and produced a 16.2-sq. in. ribeye, .3-inch backfat, 1.9 Yield Grade and a High Choice quality grade.

agers and breed associations incorporate education and practicality into junior steer projects. This type of show will justifiably reward the junior cattleman who exhibits the Angus steer that excels in weight per day of age along with yielding a carcass that is valuable from both a quality and yield grade standpoint."

The statement's author is Brian McCulloh, former director of the Association's junior activities. He was describing the prototype contest staged at the 1984 National Junior Angus Show, Columbus, Ohio. Rules then were similar with registered parentage and visual requirements for Angus registration except animals with excessive white were eligible to compete.

It was a trial run. The Association did encourage participation with premium incentives, and in keeping with the embryonic spirit of the thing, an ad hoc group known as the Angus Steer Boosters raised funds of more than \$1,000 to award the overall champions.

The effort took root, and plans were laid to formally develop a registered steer show program with a terminal emphasis.

"We realize not all shows can be terminal," Hurlbut concedes. "Killing facilities just aren't that convenient everywhere." Even the well-planned

NAILE effort hit a ripple when the packing plant selected for the kill and carcass grading went on strike just before the event.

But "terminal show" may become an industry buzzword if breed associations become enthused. Dean Hurlbut remembers the interbreed shows and the tremendous publicity champions from that competition would generate for the different British breeds.

After the invasion by continental breeds, the interbreed show soon became unwieldy, Hurlbut recalls. Was the steer purebred, commercial, crossbred, or a mongrel? With breed identity so confused, breed organizations abandoned the idea and steer shows became the stepchild of crossbreeding programs adopted by commercial cattle raisers.

Now, with today's economics at play, the packing industry's conversion to boxed beef, and framier British

cattle, Hurlbut expects more breed activity toward the registered steer and eventually, a rebirth of interbreed competition.

And speaking of the Angus in particular, he doesn't predict the registered Angus steer to become an overnight phenomenon. Rather progress, he thinks, will be steady at first, then exert a domino effect as state fairs join in over the next three or four years.

The registered steer. Perhaps an idea whose time has come. Yet, the reasons for its emergence may not be all that economic. Just like David Brown, Joe Skaggs of Rockville, Ind., was intrigued with the contest, but he entered with a different purpose.

"If I get a market, fine," he said. "Really, I just entered for the fun."

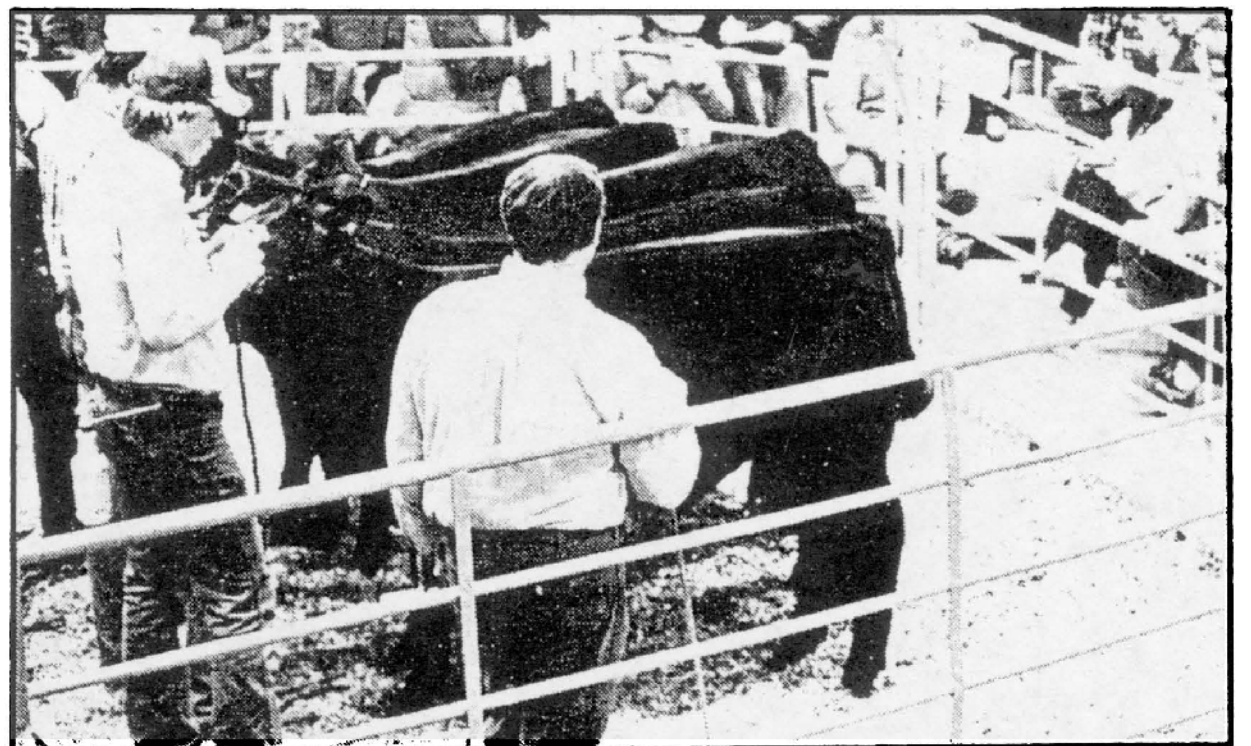
And there's something to be said for that as well.

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Pen of five steer show reborn at American Royal



Agitation by breed groups and concerned individuals has produced new interest in pen steer contests and interbreed competition at the Kansas City livestock show. Top Angus entry was from Andy Byergo of Barnard, Mo. The pen group shown here took grand champion slot among the breed entries; supreme champions and reserves were Chi-Angus crosses. Shown from left are Byergo, Rich Elofson and his children Amanda and Matthew, Jim Husz, Terry Holt, Steve Houston, Debbie Simpson, Joe Byergo, judge Jerry Adamson of Cody, Neb., and Jay Ewald of Oppenheimer Industries. Oppenheimer and Elofson were trophy donors.



Top steer from Byergos brought \$775 in the sale following the show. Four of the five were sired by E&W Bravo and ranged in weight from 525 to 700 lb.