



Bill Parchman and his manager, Dave Long, have built a quality Angus herd based on performance records at Kiata Farm near Hamilton, Ohio.

Bill Parchman's foresight and career path led him to Kiata Farm.

THE RETIREMENT PLAN

*Now that he's retired from the real estate business,
life as an Angus breeder has really just begun.*

BY JANET MAYER

Retirement for former Cincinnati businessman Bill Parchman has meant more than lounging around his home, playing golf or traveling. Although he enjoys doing all of those things, the youthful and fit 74-year-old also runs three miles, four mornings a week.

Another of his favorite things to do is to make frequent jaunts to Kiata Farm, the Angus breeding operation he owns near Hamilton, Ohio. Although he lives on the east side of Cincinnati, nearly an hour away from his farm, he goes there most days when he is not traveling.

"You could say I have always been a frustrated farmer," Parchman says with an easy laugh. "I enjoy getting out in the fresh air at the farm. I probably get in the way more than I accomplish anything, but it all works out because I have a real good working relationship

with my manager, Dave Long. He is dedicated and a bit of a perfectionist.”

Parchman didn't grow up on a farm, and didn't go to an agriculture school. Long is the expert as far as the cattle are concerned.

Still, Parchman is a personable, energetic type, whose enthusiasm runs strong, no matter what the endeavor. As an enterprising entrepreneur, Parchman founded his own real estate company in 1946. Later, in partnership with a friend, Clark Oyler, the company was expanded into 19 offices with 275 sales associates. In 1981 the company merged with the nation's largest real estate firm, Coldwell Banker Company.

It was during his years in real estate that Parchman inadvertently bought his farm and embarked on breeding cattle. He and three other men had taken an option on a farm earmarked for a boys' camp. When the deal fell through, Parchman, anticipating retirement in another 25 years, bought the property himself. He named the farm after Kiata, an Indian chief who is said to be buried in an Indian mound located on the property.

Later, Parchman bought additional land about six miles away and sold part of the original acreage, giving him his present holding of 340 acres.

“Not too long after I bought that farm, I purchased four Angus cows. I had a client who was getting divorced, and she had to sell her cows,” Parchman recalls. “I had no scientific reason for choosing the Angus breed; it just happened that the cows this person was selling were Angus.”

Since then, he has realized what a lucky thing this was. “Angus is a superior breed of cattle not only in maternal traits, but in great carcass quality as well,” he says.

Shortly after buying the cows, Parchman got acquainted with Sen. Albert Gore Sr. of Tennessee and bought a cow from his herd. By buying more cows from various production sales, Parchman slowly increased his herd number. He became a member of the American Angus Association and registered the first Kiata Angus calves in 1966.

“I never set out with any particular goals in mind for either the cattle or the farm,” Parchman says. “At that time, I was busy with my business. After I bought the cattle, I didn't intend to set any records with them, I just enjoyed having them and associating with the people associated with the Angus breed.”

During that time, Parchman bought

what he thought were modern, good cattle, but really didn't have any idea of what direction he was going with a breeding program for the herd.

This all changed when he hired

Dave Long as farm manager 15 years ago. Long, who grew up on a farm near Columbus, Ohio, is an animal science graduate of Ohio State University. “I guess you could say the relationship between Bill and me has proven to be a successful one,” Long says. “We both share the belief that a positive attitude

addressed this problem by splitting the applications over a two-year period. We now have good forage crops of orchardgrass, clover, alfalfa and tall fescue.”

Since Kiata cattle must survive basically on forage crops, the breeding program is geared to keep feed costs down by using a minimum amount of grain. To achieve this goal, cattle have been bred to have a slightly smaller frame and to be easy fleshing and feed efficient. Long says using an intensive grazing system throughout the summer and fall months



Ohio winters are long but often provide enchanting scenes such as this at Kiata Farm.

and confidence in the cattle we breed is both helpful and necessary in running a prosperous operation. The bottom line at Kiata is to make money, and we have been aiming to breed the right kind of cattle to achieve that.”

One of the first hurdles Long faced after being hired was making the acreage on the farm productive. The farm was comprised of 340 acres of rolling hills with soil he describes as poor and rocky and not fit for anything but sheep, cattle or golf courses. Growing crops other than hay was out of the question.

Just about all of the acreage at the main farm, where Long lives, is used for pasture or hay production for the herd of 65 registered Angus cows.

It was a “black day” when Long received the results of the first soil tests. “The readings were so low, they didn't even register on the scale,” he says. “They called for 8 tons of lime per acre. We

has worked well. However, since calves that go through sales sell better if they achieve a good weight gain, they are creep-fed grain to offset lower gains on fescue pastures.

Long says the demand for certain types of cattle in southwest Ohio has also directed the breeding program. The primary market for Kiata cattle has been for project steers and heifers for 4-H members, and for purebred seedstock for both breeding and show purposes.

Although the cattle are bred with show purposes in mind, both Parchman and Long feel putting performance into the program is a necessity both as an asset to herd replacement selections and as an additional selling point.

“We have tried to incorporate performance into our show cattle because we are convinced you can have the best of both worlds,” Parchman says. “To achieve this, we have been performance testing

through the Association's Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) for quite a few years."

Decisions on what sires to use in the breeding program are usually made by Long. He uses the Angus Sire Evaluation as a guide, paying particular attention to a bull's expected progeny differences (EPDs) for birth weight and yearling weight.

"I feel the only way an average herd has access to the top bulls of the Angus breed is by using artificial insemination (AI)," Long says. "To take a lot of the risk out of breeding, I use proven bulls. I might sample one or two new ones each year, but I really want to be able to see the progeny a bull has produced."

Kiata Farm has a great market for show heifers, but in other sales they participate in, four- or five-year-old cows are in demand. In order to get a good price out of females of this age, Long feels they better have proven performance in their background, which is another reason to use proven bulls. Long does the AI work himself. Parchman says Long's conception rate is high, with the clean-up bull accounting for only five calves this past year. Clean-up bulls are usually of Kiata breeding and are used for a period of two years.

Calving season for the operation begins in January and continues through mid-March, with a few stragglers in April and May. There is also a fall calving season, which occurs in September and early October.

Over the years, as the herd became established, Parchman found there wasn't a strong bull market in his area. To offset this, Kiata Farm began participating in the Belle Valley Performance State Test, where its bulls usually finished in the top 10.

However, because of the long distance from the farm to the test station, and a steadily growing private treaty customer base, the decision was made to discontinue participating in the bull test.

Today, most of Kiata's bulls are sold by private treaty to purebred operations, with some being marketed to commercial cattle producers. Long has found most of their commercial customers don't pay much attention to EPDs or pedigrees.

Bulls and other cattle are also sold at the Ohio Beef Expo, as well as through five consignment sales during the year. Parchman and Long believe in selling their quality cattle and not culls at these sales.

"Buyers form an opinion about the quality of your herd by what they see at shows and sales," Long says. "If they are not impressed, it's unlikely they will ever take the time to visit your herd or buy any of your cattle."



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— Bill Parchman

Parchman names the Showcase Sale, held each year on Labor Day, as one of the most outstanding Angus sales in which they participate. "We have participated in this sale for the past 15 years, along with about six or eight breeders who each consign six or eight lots," he says. "We take pride in doing well in that sale with a consistently high average."

This year Kiata Farm had the top-selling lot, which sold for \$5,700. The average for their consignments was \$3,850.

With the purchase of any Kiata animal comes a full satisfaction guarantee. This has become a selling point most customers find attractive. "We've had few problems with any cattle being returned," Parchman says. "We do personal follow up, starting with a thank-you note or a phone call soon after a sale. We also visit the herds of as many of our customers as possible."

The show ring is another method that Kiata Farm uses as a marketing tool. In an effort to establish a local customer base, Parchman began entering his cattle in shows about 25 years ago. Cattle are entered in local and state livestock shows as well as those held in surrounding states.

There is a limit, however, to the number of shows in which they can participate, since Long is the only full-time employee at Kiata Farm. One other employee works part-time. When they enter shows such as the Kentucky State Fair or the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, a high school student is usually hired to assist Long with the cattle at the shows.

Parchman knows most cattle are sold within a 50-mile radius of where they are bred. He highly recommends newcomers get involved in their local and state cattle associations. Feeling there was an advantage to having a good local Angus organization, in the late 1970s Parchman joined fellow Angus breeders in reviving the nearly defunct Miami Valley Angus Association. It is now one of the strongest in Ohio. He is also proud to have served as president of the Ohio Angus Association for two years.

"We have tried to be active in local and state organizations because it spreads the word. Other members get to meet you, and they have confidence in you because they see you're honest and are trying to do a good job."

Still, Parchman has found word-of-mouth is probably the best advertising of all. "It's a powerful tool," he says. "One satisfied customer may tell as many as 10 potential buyers. But you have to be careful, because one unsatisfied buyer spreads the word just as fast."

All in all, being involved in the cattle business has been a satisfying way of life for Parchman and Long. "We do fitting demonstrations for area 4-H clubs and try to help both the members and their parents," Long says. "It's surprising how quickly these kids grow up and buy cattle of their own. When we sell cattle, it's nice to watch a herd develop from that stock and know they came from our herd. I guess we must be doing something right, because there are times when the demand for Kiata cattle exceeds supply."

Parchman does not readily take any of the credit for the success of Kiata cattle. "When Dave came, he gave a direction to where the operation was headed. He pointed us down that path, and I think people have come to respect the breeding program we have established in our operation. Without him, I don't know that I would still be in the business," Parchman says.

