

# CATTLE CULTURE

by Megan Silveira, assistant editor

## Built With the Same Blocks

*Cattlemen and women of all backgrounds share the same foundational love for the industry.*

I still remember the day we brought my first heifer, Elizabeth, home. I walked her through the barn (a horse barn, built lovingly by a set of supportive parents who had no idea their child was going to flip hobbies on them) and pretended like she wasn't dragging me out to the pasture, ready for her next meal.

Elizabeth and I spent a lot of time together that first year she came to our ranch in Denair, Calif., and the years after. She taught me a lot — about myself and about raising cattle. Her genetics served as the foundation for the herd I have today.

That single cow became the baseline for my passion for the cattle industry. It's a passion that took me on adventures across my home state from show ring to show ring, a passion that took me to Oklahoma State University, a passion that led me to this job I am proud to have.

My story is special to me, but it's

one I see reflected in so many of our members. There seems to always be one animal, one person, one moment that served as the first building block for the future of that individual.

In December, I traveled to Pennsylvania to meet with Cheryl and Bill Fairbairn (read more about their story on page 28). Along the way, I ventured to Penn State to meet with Wendall Landis and his students at the college's beef and sheep center.

There's history in every inch of the facility. Pens that hold calving cows in today's winter months previously served as a show barn; an area with desks lined up for finals week has seen both auctions and judging competitions; and a herd of quality, sound cattle has been walking the same trails forged by the university's first Angus cattle in 1911.

The university's past in the Angus industry is certainly impressive, but it was actually the passion and

knowledge of the students that struck me as the most memorable.

Two of the budding cattle producers living at the center served as my tour guides. After just a few minutes with them, it was easy to see why Wendall talks about his students with such high regard.

They might be young, but the men and women working with the Penn State herd clearly love what they do. They know the bloodlines of cattle, can talk industry with the best of them, and know how to calmly and efficiently work livestock.

As I enjoyed a beautiful — and cold — morning in the college town, I was reminded of just how similar all Angus breeders are.

I've said it before, but it's truly an inborn love for livestock that gives us the desire to get up each morning at outrageous hours, venture out into the coldest of temperatures, year after year and day after day.

While we all might be building our own future, I think it's a beautiful thing that we are founded in some of the same core concepts. No matter where we call home, no matter when we found our passion for the industry, no matter the name of our first heifer, we all know what it's like to know we were made to be a cattle producer and a proud member of *The Business Breed*. 

