

So much of this Angus life revolves around the family's schedules and other demands from off-farm incomes. To make it all happen means a special dedication as all the family members contribute and pull together. Here's one such story, and yet it's uniquely atypical.

For there are no "typical" Angus families. Each adds its own particular dimension and flavor to the whole, each is a variation on a theme. And it's the weekends when the Angus element of the family's activities become so evident. Whether show or sale, branding or annual banquet, most of the events and workload consume the weekend in one way or another. Check the calendar on your wall or that of a fellow breeder's, and you'll find if it says, "Work cattle," it's likely...

# Saturday Mornings

by John Miller, Blackfoot (Idaho) News

Photographs by Kathy Shelton, Blackfoot News, and Jim Cotton.



Chel Adams of Firth leads two lives.

A good portion of his day is spent as the principal at A.W. Johnson Elementary School here. His "therapy" after a long day at the office is coming home to Adams Angus Acres in the Rose area.

Adams, 42, has been around Angus cattle all his life. His father

Bob, 69, has been in the Angus business 44 years, and he still runs the Leadore Angus Ranch in central Idaho.

"Being raised on a ranch gets in your blood," Adams said. "I get tired of the city, it's good to live on a ranch. We have better kids as a result. It gives them things to do."

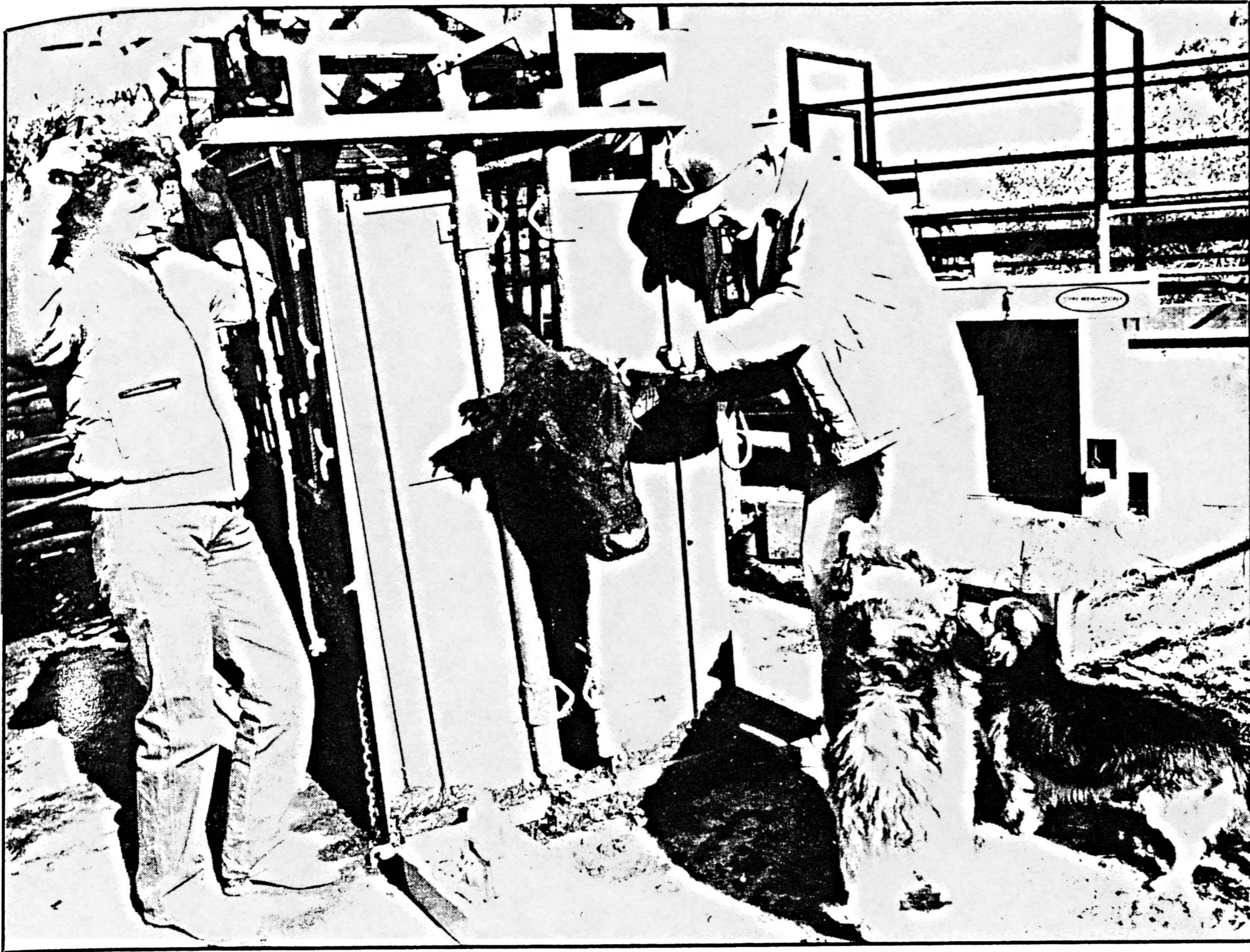
Adams and his wife, Phyllis, have three children—Lisa, 20, Eric, 17, and Scott, 15. They have all been very active in 4-H, school, and the Angus business, Adams said.

He runs 53 head of mother cows, and raises seed stock. He caters to the commercial rancher with 17 head of bulls now at the ranch for an annual production sale with the Leadore Angus Ranch.

That's one life.

In the other, Adams is now in his 20th year in the education field. He has a master's degree in

Saturday mornings mean cartoons for his students, but Chel Adams, school principal and Angus breeder, seldom has time for such frivolity or leisure. There's always something to be done "around the place."



Weekends are more than a fishing trip or backyard barbecue for this Angus family, the Adamases of Firth, Idaho. Cows need to be bred, calves vaccinated, or the show string clipped. For a busy grade school principal, the avocation is "therapy." For a busy housewife-homemaker-herdslady, the cattle are rather a part of her daily routine. Here, Phyllis Adams expertly mans the headgate while her husband Chet eartags.

Adams said Eric, a senior at Firth High School serving as student body president, doesn't seem to want any

special education from Idaho State University. He spent five years in Anchorage, Alaska, as a teacher and administrator. From there, he went straight to Firth as principal at A.W. Johnson Elementary. He's worked there for 14 years.

"When I was in high school, I wanted to get off the ranch and do something else," Adams said. "I like working with kids, and a career in education seemed like the best way to go."

The Adams family has lived in the same comfortable two-story ranch house in Rose for 13 years. Adams has been in the registered Angus business since 1972.

"I get antsy every spring," he said. "I guess I just start thinking about the days on the ranch in Leadore. It's been a good experience, it's been good here."

One gripe Adams has about the farming and ranching business is grain prices. Adams raises his own feed. He owns 100 acres of land and leases 175 for grain.

If he wasn't in the registered Angus business, Adams said, he would be hurting.

"We've had excellent cattle sales, it's been one of the top sales in the northwest the last four years," he said. "But there's no way to make a profit raising grain."

Adams Angus Acres is a family operation. His wife does the calving in the winter and watches the cows during the day when Adams is off at school.

The Adams children also get in a lot of work time. In fact, Adams said, they've generated enough money that Lisa could send herself to college and Eric is driving a nice car purchased with his own money.

"The kids need to buy their own cows," Adams said. "There's the satisfaction of earning the money and buying the cattle, and there's a lot of side benefits that come with it."

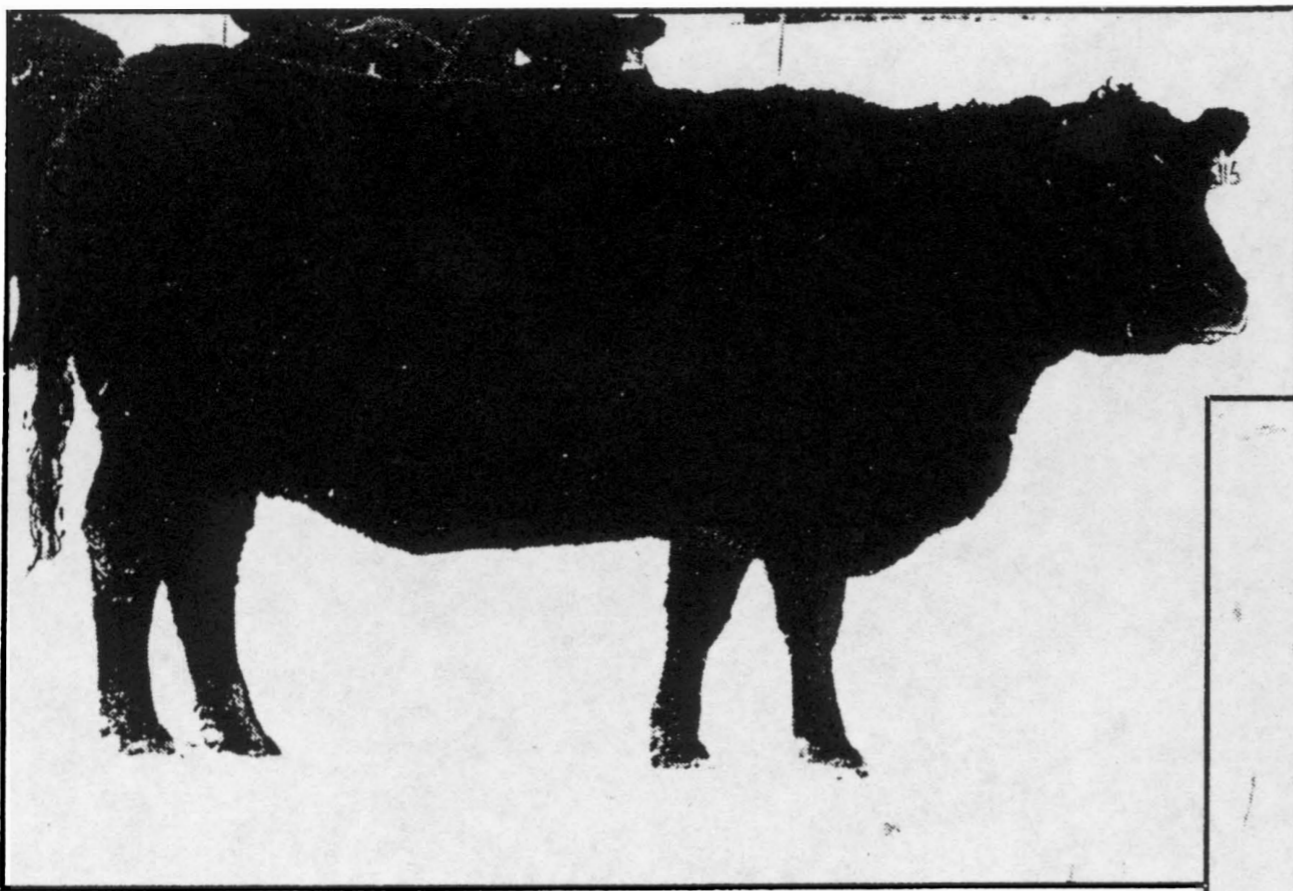
*A grizzled veteran of many Saturday mornings, "Smoky" is a bit stove-up and hard of hearing now at the age of 13. His family describe him as the best herding dog they've had, but this may be the last winter for "Smoky".*

part of the ranching business when he leaves school. Scott, a sophomore at Firth, does want to continue as a rancher.

Adams said his day usually starts at 5 a.m., taking care of ranch chores before leaving for school. When he gets home from the office, he takes care of more chores, going to bed around 10:30 p.m.

"The farm serves as real therapy, it gets my mind off of school," Adams said. "I can do something





A Pathfinder cow, #5115 has produced nine calves, 105 ratio.

This cow has produced 11 calves with an average ratio of 107. She's a 1970 model, a "Trailblazer" cow and sired by Panorama Sunny Lane 2. (#96).



physical to ease the tension from school."

"Besides, the cows don't talk back to him," his wife adds.

Adams said his education career gets first priority over the ranch, and the two careers can be quite compatible.

"My goal was to own a small farm," he said. "A farm can't be self-supporting unless the ground is paid for."

The Adams family has also been very successful in the 4-H program. They've claimed grand and reserve champions. Their cattle have won in the Western States Angus show the last five years, showing the grand champion female twice and the grand champion bull once.

The Adams children are members of the Idaho Junior Angus Association.

Adams plans to continue the pace he has set for himself, juggling ranching and education for at least another 13 years.

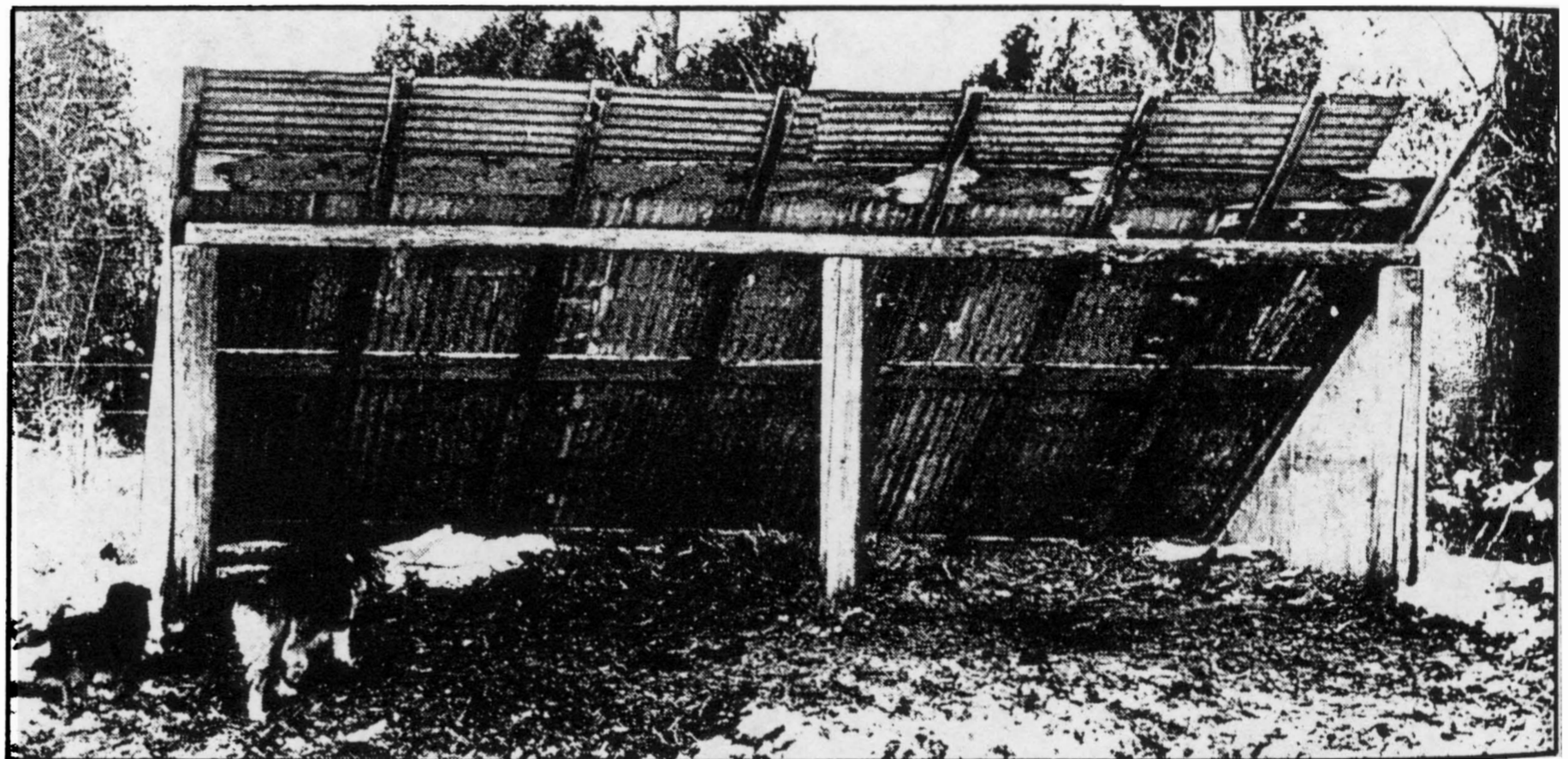
"I have a goal to retire from education by the time I'm 55," he said. "By that time, I hope to be in a position to farm full-time.

"Whether that goal is realized depends on the farm economy."

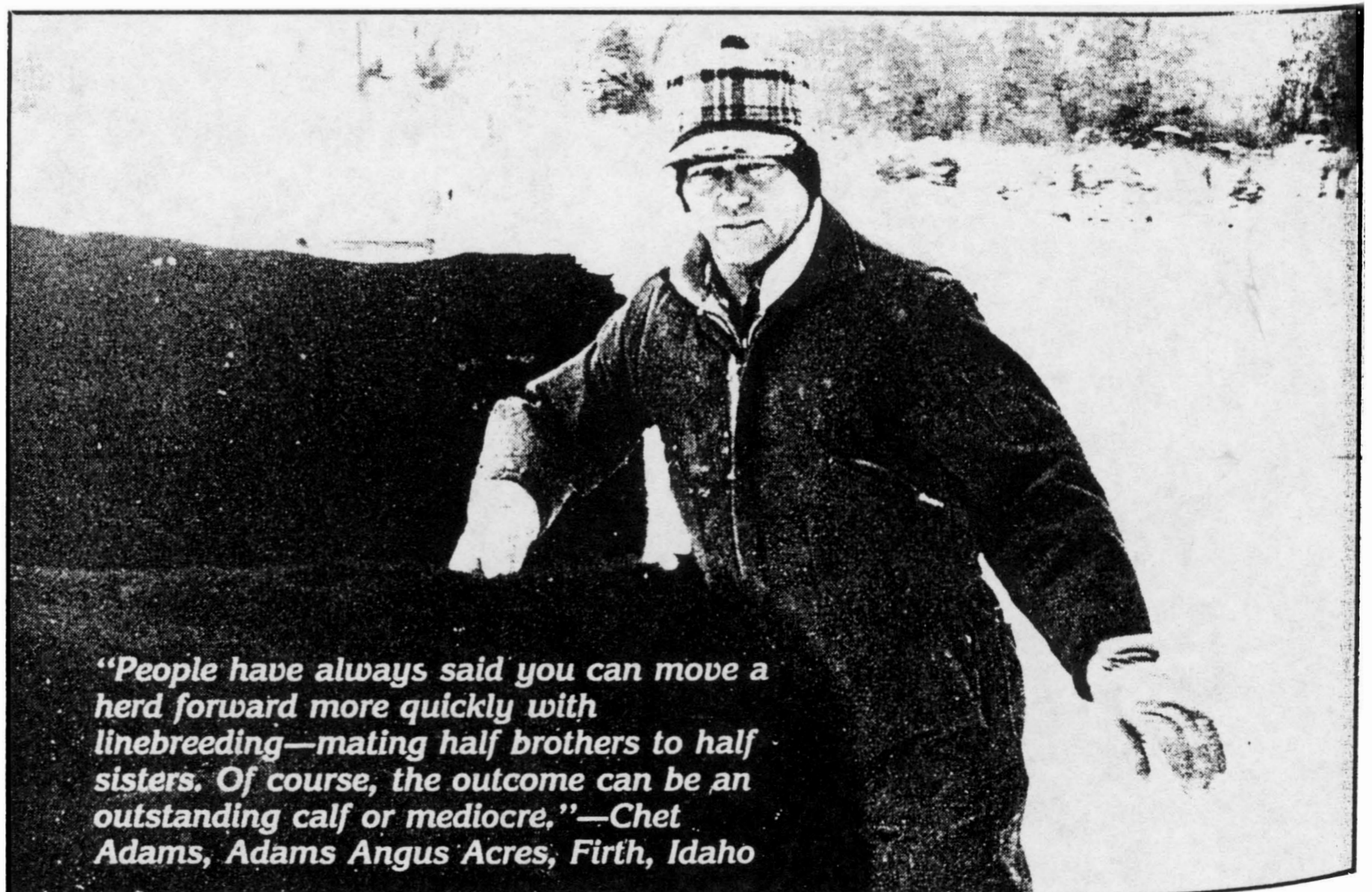
Adams sees the farm economy in a very depressed state. He said 1985 has been his most discouraging year.

"Prices have dropped so dramatically," he said. "But, it's gonna get better. I'm optimistic. The futures market looks good. People will still buy red meat years down the road.

"If people in the cattle business can hang on, they'll be better off than the grain farmers. That's for sure."



Shelter in the time o' storm. Several structures placed about the calving pastures help fend off the Idaho northerns.



"People have always said you can move a herd forward more quickly with linebreeding—mating half brothers to half sisters. Of course, the outcome can be an outstanding calf or mediocre."—Chet Adams, Adams Angus Acres, Firth, Idaho