

Certified Angus Beef



Sire Evaluation: Benefiting All Segments of the Cattle Industry

Consistency and predictability is what Sonny Obrecht of the Louie Petrie Ranch is striving for with his commercial cow herd and its offspring.

The Certified Angus Beef Program's supply development division is striving to provide licensed Certified Angus Beef packing plants, distributors, retailers and restaurateurs with a high quality, consistent beef product.

By working together, producers like Obrecht and the CAB Program can reach these goals and benefit all segments of the cattle industry.

In addition to the cattle, family involvement is an inherent constant at the Louie Petrie Ranch. The ranch's history dates back to 1904 when George Petrie founded the ranch five miles north of Turner, Mont.

George's sons, Louie and Leo, assumed management of the operation in 1939, running Angus cattle and sheep. The cattle were sold in 1941, and they continued to run sheep until 1954 when the ranch partnership was split up and Louie returned to Angus cattle.

Sonny Obrecht married Louie's daughter, Nellie, in July 1965, and became a partner in the ranching activities in December of the same year. Recently, Sonny and Nellie's son, Sam, purchased his grandmother's (Frances), interest in the ranch and is now building his own herd of Angus cows. Sonny proudly shares the fact that "this is a family operation with four generations actively involved."

The commercial operation today consists of 650 head of cows. Due to the harsh, cold and windy Montana environment, each cow requires approximately 30 acres of pasture. It is a grass and cake operation with less than a ton of hay supplemented per year during the severe, cold temperatures.

"We're in the business to raise heifers for replacements in our cow herd, Obrecht says. "We need a cow that is feminine, has some eye appeal and a lot of 'do-ability' to fit our harsh environment."

Most of their calves are weaned at 500-550 pounds. "We're not trying to produce the most pounds. Extremes will not work in our environment," explains Obrecht. He strives for calves that con-

vert well, are efficient on feed and hang carcasses averaging 700 pounds.

Artificial insemination (AI) has been an integral part of the ranch since 1960 when Louie Petrie attended the American Breeders Service's first beef AI school held in DeForest, Wis. Foremost of Wye was the first bull used for AI on the Petrie Ranch.

"Wye bulls have always been used heavily in our herd over the years," explains Obrecht. "We have always pur-

have been successful but not always technically advanced. In 1982, Sonny met a semen service representative who was promoting a bull called Big Moose. Since Sonny owned a dog named Moose, he figured it must have been a "sign" and bought 50 straws of Big Moose semen. As it turned out, Big Moose daughters have been some of the top producing cows in the herd.

When it comes to carcass data, Obrecht prefers to be more precise. "It is



(above) Sonny Obrecht collects carcass data on progeny from his herd of Angus.

(right) Entrance to Louie Petrie Ranch near Turner, Mont.



chased our natural service bulls from Jim Turner of Green Valley Angus because of the Wye influence."

Wye bulls played such an important role in the operation that Louie's early records identified other bulls used with a simple "F". "Louie was the only one who knew for sure which cows were bred to specific bulls other than those from Wye," says Obrecht with a smile.

Their techniques for selecting bulls

important to us to build a set of females with known carcass capabilities," says Obrecht. He adds, "every rancher should take the time to look at their cattle on feed and find out how they perform."

In 1987, Sonny started working with the American Angus Association to test sires for progeny carcass merit by testing bulls for John Hoyt of Jolly Roger Angus. Since then, the ranch has gathered data on eight sires for both Jolly Roger Angus, Belt,

Mont., and Gartner-Denowh Angus, Sidney, Mont. He likes working with these herds because of their concentration on maternal traits and access to their top bulls.

Obrecht is particularly proud of one set of tested calves sired by Jolly Roger bulls. Of the set of steers, 51.7 percent qualified for the CAB Program; 87.6 percent graded Choice. The group had an average carcass yield of 64.4 percent, with a feed conversion of 5.87:1.

"The added benefit is that these steers were only 13 months old," says Obrecht.

All of the calves tested for the Louie Petrie Ranch have been fed at Decatur County Feed Yard, located in Oberlin, Kan.

As a commercial cattle producer, Obrecht benefits from the CAB Program's sire evaluation efforts by receiving accurate carcass information on the progeny of his cow herd and having the opportunity to retain replacement heifers sired by the bulls tested. The CAB Program, as well as the entire beef industry, benefits by increasing the predictability of carcass performance from Angus and Angus crossbred steers and heifers.

Their combined efforts provide a solid base for CAB Program's continued success and assurance that the Louie Petrie Ranch will be passed down to future generations.

— *Larry Dorsey and Jenny Plocher*

CAB Feedlot Gain & Carcass Contest Progress Report

December 24 marked the official weigh-in for 495 steers entered in the second Certified Angus Beef Feedlot Gain & Carcass Contest.

The cattle were sorted into five pens, according to body conformation and size, the first week of December at Decatur County Feed Yard.

Average official starting weights for the five pens are:

Pen #	# Of Cattle	Average Weight
80	87	735 lb
81	86	633 lb
82	99	716 lb
83	131	711 lb
84	92	650 lb

*Weights include 4% shrink

Projected break-even price per pen:

Pen #	Estimated Sale Date	Weight	Position
80	5/28/92	1,200 lb	\$75.39/cwt
81	6/23/92	1,175 lb	\$72.00/cwt
82	5/26/92	1,200 lb	\$75.53/cwt
83	6/01/92	1,200 lb	\$74.43/cwt
84	6/23/92	1,185 lb	\$72.45/cwt

*Figures are feedlot management projections based on averages; actual slaughter dates will be determined based upon when feedlot management and the contest coordinator feel steers reach an optimum degree of finish. Pens may be sorted prior to slaughter.

Monthly contest updates will be mailed to all entrants. Interested Angus breeders and cattle producers are invited to visit Decatur County Feed Yard in Oberlin, Kan. anytime.

For more information on the Certified Angus Beef Feedlot Gain & Carcass Contest, contact Larry Dorsey at (406) 763-4366.