



Lamoine Valley Enthusiasm and Teamwork are Contagious

by Barb Baylor Anderson

Lamoine Valley Angus Association (LVAA) fever is contagious, and it only takes one encounter to catch it. The enthusiasm and cooperation radiated by this local association in west central Illinois have convinced more than one junior that activities rooted in the Angus business are rewarding down the road.

No one is a stranger for long at Lamoine Valley sales or field days. Association folks take all young cattle enthusiasts into the fold and help them fashion their individual tools of the trade. The emphasis isn't on just selecting quality Angus cattle for the show ring; but also on nurturing leadership skills, building confidence, learning to cooperate well with adults and other juniors and having a great deal of fun.

These are the qualities "alumni juniors" Bill Hollis of Bushnell, Ill., Bruce Kiesewetter of Farmington, Ill., and I, Barb Baylor Anderson of Edwardsville, Ill., obtained from LVAA.

"Everyone in Lamoine Valley wants to help you succeed," says Hollis. "Our

family attended field days each summer whether we had cattle to show or not because it was fun. I saw people representing other breeds, 4-H and FFA at events. Most of them knew it was a good place to socialize and make new friends."

Hollis' positive experiences with Lamoine Valley and the cattle industry provided a base for future successes. Bill

took two years off from college to serve as Illinois FFA president and national FFA vice president. As a junior Angus association member, he held offices with the Illinois Junior Angus Association (NJAA), and served on the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) board of directors. Bill was chairman of the board when his term ended in 1991.

Hollis has chosen to further his interest in cattle by incorporating them into his career. A senior in animal science at the University of Illinois, he will find out in April whether he's been accepted to veterinary school.

"Raising livestock and riding with the local vet several times since high school helped me choose a career," Hollis says. "I am going to specialize in food animal medicine, so I can work with large animals."

Bill's participation at Angus shows began when he was eight. One of his memories is of the Kiesewetter brothers' deep involvement with LVAA field day activities.

Bruce Kiesewetter, like Bill Hollis, pursued his cattle interest with a degree in animal science from the University of Illinois. Bruce graduated in 1986, and then began his own custom cattle fitting service.

"You look up to people older than you when you're eight or nine," Hollis reminisces. "I used to watch the older kids and adults and think they



Barb Baylor Anderson, an Angus enthusiast and freelance writer from Edwardsville, Ill., shares her experiences as a Lamoine Valley Angus Association junior member with fellow alumni Bill Hollis and Bruce Kiesewetter in this profile.

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were great. Then when you get to that point yourself, you want to succeed, too."

Success has never been a foreign word to Kieseewetter. He held nearly all of the offices in the IJAA, and served on the NJAA board of directors for two years in the mid-1980s. He also won the first Charles Ryan Herdsman Memorial Award in 1989 during a one-year stint managing show and sale cattle for Silveira Brothers in Mendota, Calif.

Bruce is currently organizing the judging team for the local FFA alumni association. He has served as chairman of the Mid-Continent Livestock Judging Contest for the last five years.

"I knew what I wanted to do by the time I was a freshman in high school," Kieseewetter says. "The involvement and enthusiasm of Lamoine Valley juniors and adults helped me to learn to deal well with people, have a good time and still be serious about the business. I probably wouldn't be doing what I'm doing today if I hadn't gotten involved and made a lot of contacts."

Bruce is putting the leadership skills he gained to good use. He says his experiences and contacts have given him opportunity to expand his business and to assist other junior members. Past exposure to local, state and national activities have been invaluable. Bruce hopes he can pass some of the skills he's learned to other juniors.

"Junior members shouldn't sit back and wait for something to happen. They need to jump in and express

their ideas," Kieseewetter advises. "Any contribution, no matter how big or small, is important."

And offering contributions is the best route to getting members involved in more LVAA activities. I originally attended the association sale each November just to purchase a show heifer. Those purchases led to return trips to future sales and to field days, and encouraged me to become an active member at all levels. Now I've returned to the sale ring as a consignor for the new group of juniors looking for show calves.

Like Bruce, I served in nearly all IJAA offices, and was on the NJAA board of directors for the two years prior to his term. I also was honored to have won the first place National Angus Auxiliary Scholarship. The scholarship and skills I gained from junior activities facilitated my pursuit of an agricultural communications degree from the University of Illinois, and an economics master's degree from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. This career path has steered me to opportunities in agricultural radio broadcasting, covering daily activity in the livestock futures pits at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, editing a weekly market newsletter for soybean producers and working as a free-lance agricultural journalist and economist.

Perhaps the most rewarding asset of the LVAA is friendship. Bill, Bruce and I agree relationships have



(above) Bill Hollis says positive experiences with Lamoine Valley Angus Association and NJAA provided a base for his future career goal as a veterinarian.

(below) Bruce Kieseewetter's experience and leadership skills have groomed him for a career in custom cattle fitting.



carried past our junior days, into college and beyond.

"The friends I've made in the Angus business are friends forever," Kieseewetter says. "I think I have more close friends from the various Angus associations across the country than I do from my high school class."

Hollis sums up the benefits of affiliation with the LVAA. "I

would tell juniors starting out to enjoy themselves. No one is out to rip you off at the sales or field days... it's a good, honest group of people," he says. "Their first interest is people. Whether you come back to their events or not, the association is always there to help you learn and to have a good time."