
From the BARN to the CROWN and BEYOND

BY CHRISTY BELL

Being raised on a 70-acre farm in a non-agricultural city in the nation's largest growing county has been very hard and challenging for me. Attending a large school totaling 2,000 students, and myself being the only one which showed cattle, I was viewed by others as being "different."

Believe you me, I have been teased. I have heard every cow joke and every cow sound imaginable. I was once caught making signs for a cow show while in my computer science class. The signs read: NO MANURE—TRASH ONLY. The kidding from this episode lasted for weeks.

Over the years, though, I learned that being "different" was okay. I have found that I am respected more by others for being an individual thinker rather than a crowd follower. Working with Angus cattle and within the cattle industry has taught me this individualism along with responsibility, leadership, respect,

patience and compassion. I have also learned to set goals, to strive hard to reach these goals, and not to stop once I have accomplished what I set out to do, but rather to continue on setting new goals.

All of these values I bring forward with me. To be crowned Miss American Angus is not only an honor but a dream come true for me since this is something I have longed for since I was a little girl. Being Miss American Angus allows me to be a spokesperson for the world's largest beef registry and enables me to discuss issues which I'm excited about or strongly believe in.

While pondering over what I'd really like to accomplish as Miss American Angus, I picked up and began to read the final statistics for the American Angus Association's 1994 fiscal year. I noticed where every category of the American Angus Association showed improvement over the previous year; many programs breaking records or expectations. It's very easy to see that these high records and statistics indicate we are doing the right thing with the right product. I realized how easy it would be to be satisfied with what we have accomplished. On the other hand, I also realized that being satisfied would be the beginning of failure.

As Miss American Angus, traveling across the country will allow me to relay an important message to Angus breeders everywhere. Yes, we are at the top of the ladder and we should be proud and pleased with our progress. But, we must strive even harder to keep the Association and its programs building and growing. We cannot let up! The beef industry is entering a period in which superior genetics will be more important than ever before. The American Angus Association has the most sophisticated technology available for genetic evaluation of livestock.

Use this technology for the betterment of your programs. Carcass data, expected progeny differences (EPDs), Certified Angus



Miss American Angus Christy Bell with her mother, Ann, at the North American Livestock Exposition.

Beef Program, and the introduction of a value-based marketing system are all programs which allow us as Angus breeders to make tremendous strides in producing cattle which provide economic value to our industry. I also feel it's important to continue to educate not only the consumer but also the public about Certified Angus Beef™ product — the nutritional value, the safety, and consistency of the product we are producing.

After a year as Miss American Angus, I will continue my education at the University of Georgia, majoring in animal science with a minor in agri-business or agricultural communications.

I have chosen to take my love for Angus on into my career. My plans are to become the first female American Angus Association field representative. I have been inspired by our Angus field representative, David Gazda. I often tease David, telling him only four more years and I will have his job.

Being an Angus representative would allow me to work with Angus cattle and Angus people on a day-to-day basis and allow me to further promote the breed. Taking this type of job would be difficult — especially in a male dominated profession. But for a kid who is “different,” it would be a challenge — a challenge I would love to undertake.

I will continue to build my herd to total 25 top producing females, all selected with the newest tools and technology of the industry.

I plan to organize an Angus Auxiliary within my state and I will continue my involvement with juniors, as they are our key to the future.

As I reflect back, I see myself as a little girl crying uncontrollably after placing last in my first showmanship contest. I was so disappointed. I soon learned that I should never let disappointments allow me to stray from the goals I set for myself.

I have come a long way since that day. Being involved with Angus cattle and the Angus industry has given me direction in my life and molded me into the person I am today. I have learned to face the future with open eyes to become a stronger and wiser person.

I truly believe in Angus.

AJ