



Born With It

Setting records is a family tradition for the self-proclaimed jack-of-all-trades cattleman Garrett Blanchard, but his business card boasts show and sale cattle manager for Silveira Bros. out of Firebaugh, Calif.

by Lindsay King, assistant editor

Few awards compare in prestige or honor than Herdsman of the Year, awarded at the super bowl of cattle shows — the National Western Stock Show (NWSS). Aspiring cattlemen and women of all ages line the green-covered arena in anticipation as another legend is named and handed the coveted buckle.

“My grandfather Darrell always told me that the Herdsman of the Year award was the biggest achievement someone can get,” says Garrett Blanchard, 2018 Herdsman of the Year winner, as he reminisces about the earliest days of his Angus career. “He always told me to look up to those people and that I should be inspired by them.”

Astonished that his name now accompanies those of industry leaders he considers legends, Blanchard takes a moment to cough up the “Denver crud.” Although, he is no stranger to leading his peers by example. In fact, it started long before he was first recognized for it at just 14 years old.

Four-peat

“This is the fourth herdsman award I have received, and it’s probably my last,” Blanchard says. “I was, from

what I know, the youngest person to win both the open (22) and junior (14) herdsman awards at the Western National Angus Futurity.”



In 2010, the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) presented the first annual junior herdsman award. The recipient? Blanchard at his final NJAS before he committed to pursue a career in cattle full time.

“It was my last year at nationals, and I also led the champion bred-and-owned (B&O) bull and the reserve champion B&O female,” Blanchard says as he also recalls taking home multiple Silver Pitcher Awards from his time as an Angus junior. “It was quite the week to say the least.”

The son of Rick and Allison Blanchard came along just as his parents were coming down from traveling the show circuit. Blanchard says he never felt pressured to keep the family tradition of holding a show stick and halter going.

“They never pressured me into this life, I have just always loved it,” Blanchard explains. “They left the decision up to me if I wanted to show cattle, but they also always backed me up.”

He started showing at 8 years old and never looked back. The third-generation cattleman has worked his whole life to be the best herdsman for his family, his cattle and, of course, the entire Angus industry.

Next steps

“When I was younger I set a handful of goals to achieve before I turned 30,” Blanchard says, who turned 29 this past February. “I set goals to win big at nationals and some end-of-the-year awards with both bulls and females and then to win this award, also.”

The shock of achieving goals, a year early even, solidifies the humble work ethic Blanchard lives by. His next goal is to breed and raise the next great NWSS champion. His daily decisions make strides toward producing the next influential animal for the Business Breed.

“My father and I are always talking about breeding the next great animal — it’s this competitive side of the



industry that keeps us going when we want to quit,” Blanchard says.

The family is bonded by their love of cattle. Blanchard’s grandfather Darrell Silveira married his grandmother and raised his father. The Silveira dynasty starts with Darrell and his brother, and it extends to Blanchard and into the future.

“There are so many people who have taught me these skills and influenced my life to get me where I am today,” Blanchard says, though he gives his family the most credit. “My family did the biggest job by getting me around those people so I could learn from each of them.”

The ultimate key to Blanchard’s success is the realization that he can learn something from everyone and there is no single avenue for success.

“What has truly made me who I am today is that I have taken little things from every person I was around or taught me something,” Blanchard says. “I try to take the best from every person or situation and then make it my own.”

Advice

Where there is a will, there is a way. Nothing substitutes hard work in Blanchard’s eyes, especially in the industry known for spurring each

other forward.

“I know a lot of people think they cannot reach a certain level, but if you want something bad enough you will find a way,” Blanchard says. “I am the kind of person that when I set my sights on something, I don’t quit until I achieve it.”



Receiving the Herdsman Award is a family affair. Pictured (from left) are Rick and Allison Blanchard; Kelsey Shott; Madison Weaver, Miss American Angus; Garrett Blanchard and Nicole Pohlmann.

Blanchard describes himself as a social extrovert, something he credits for the connections he has made. He notes the role this played in his success and the difference it will make for young cattlemen and women today.

“Having lots of quality connections in the Angus industry has played a big role in my cattle career,” Blanchard says.

It’s also a major factor in why, out of the many shows he attends, he loves showing at the NWSS the

most, without a doubt in his mind.

Generally, they haul an average of four to eight head to shows across the country. Denver is a different story. Anywhere from 15 to 22 head of cattle load up in California and make their way to Colorado.

“We haul enough cattle to make sure we are in every sale at Denver,” Blanchard says. “We end up making a spectacle of our stall set up. We try to make it really inviting.”

Traffic through the Silveira Bros. stalls sometimes takes Blanchard’s breath away. Family, friends, buyers, ranchers, everyone takes a stroll at Denver.

“It is the biggest show of the year and the one I look forward to the

most,” Blanchard says as he also notes that it’s easily the source of the most work and stress, but it’s well worth it.

For Blanchard, the NWSS in Denver takes on even more meaning after taking home the 2018 Herdsman of the Year buckle. **AJ**