

Competition to Keep Sharp

Krebs says the National Western helped him build a program, a name and friendships.

by Miranda Reiman, director of digital content and strategy

It was 1958 and Eldon Krebs had never been to a cattle show any bigger than his county fair. That was until his father brought young Eldon and a home-raised steer out to the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver that January. Winning his class felt akin to winning the World Series, and Krebs was hooked.

That experience kickstarted a longstanding tradition — he's been back to the NWSS every year since, building a name for himself and his cattle in tandem.

"I call it a disease. Once you get it in your blood, you can't take a shot or nothing for it," says the Gordon, Neb., Angus breeder.

Krebs has seen a lot of change, from the days of commission companies and a rush to place semen orders with the champion right there in the Yards, to the rise of Angus popularity and heightened awareness from the beef consumer. Krebs says he never could have predicted he'd find himself on a list of the legends.

"I was just trying to make a living, pay for a couple of kids and produce what I liked," Krebs says. "And who would've ever thought back then that the Angus cattle would be so dominant of the beef breeds?"



The stories of the Krebs Ranch and the National Western Stock Show are intertwined. Jake Scott (left) and Eldon Krebs (right) joined CEO Mark McCully on a recent podcast to share both, along with bits of wisdom picked up along the way.

Both in the show lineup and out in the Sandhills he calls home, those Angus cattle used to be the exception rather than the rule. It was a welcome change.

"Competition is good. It keeps you awake, or you get soft," Krebs says. "I love competition. I don't care if it's a show ring, selling a set of steers or anything. You just get too laid back if you don't have competition and want to better yourself."

Going backwards isn't the Krebs family style. This year they won Grand Champion Carload of 10 Bulls

and Grand Champion Pen of Three Bulls.

Today, Krebs and his wife, Louisa, are in the process of handing over the reins to their children and their families: Ty and Kaleigh Krebs and Jake and Kami Scott.

With the dramatic winter weather across the Midwest ahead of the NWSS, the whole Krebs Ranch crew wondered if they should forego a trip this year; but their hearts were already made up.

"I still think it creates a lot of interest that helps sell bulls," says




Jake Scott, who handles marketing and customer relations for the ranch. “I consider it equivalent to a trade show, where our ‘booth’ that we set up is our pen display, and people come by and look at it. It’s just a great conversation starter to get toe-to-toe and nose-to-nose with somebody,

and ask about them and learn what it is they’re doing and share with them what it is that we do.”

Through the lens of time, those interactions are even more valuable, Krebs says.

“My best and most personal friends have come through the stock show

here. Lifelong friends, that we started a relationship 30, 40 years ago, and that’s the camaraderie down here,” he says. “That’s part of stock show — it’s the whole stock show — it’s the people.”

To hear about everything from the fads through the years to the time Krebs tried to be a gentleman and it backfired, check out “The Stock Show: Krebs, Scott on Using the Ring to Build a Ranch, Relationships” on Season 2 of *The Angus Conversation* podcast or visit www.TheAngusConversation.com. 

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