

Sisters Find Success

First-generation Angus breeders have been profoundly impacted by involvement with the Angus Foundation.

by Sarah Hill, special projects editor

While many Angus families have decades in the business, the Schnoor family, Chowchilla, Calif., is the first generation to develop their Angus herd. When the family started out in the Angus business 21 years ago, they had no idea that their Angus involvement would impact their lives so profoundly.

Brad and Mindy Schnoor were no strangers to the beef business before getting involved in the Angus side of things. Mindy's parents raise commercial cattle and Brad's father had a Hereford herd.

The Schnoors have three daughters: Amanda, Kirbe and Sydney. When Amanda was 9, the couple bought their first registered Angus heifer, and Schnoor Sisters Cattle Co. was created.

"That's when things really evolved," Brad says. "We knew some people in the industry, but we had other breeds, too."

The Angus herd isn't the only thing keeping the Schnoors busy. Brad farms full-time, growing alfalfa and almonds, while Mindy works as a preschool teacher. The family also owns a processing facility with some business partners.

Focusing on Angus

In 2010, the family decided to move forward with only registered Angus cattle — a decision spurred by the breed's promising future.

"We thought the breed was going



The Schnoor family, (from left) Sydney, Mindy, Brad, Amanda and Kirbe, got started with Angus 21 years ago.

to a place where none of the other breeds were going," Mindy says.

In particular, the Schnoor family got involved in National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) activities.

"We took our girls to their first National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) when Amanda was 13," Brad says. "We've only missed one show since then."

"At the NJAS, when you see the green coats and regional managers and everyone is so welcoming — I knew I wanted to be part of it," says Amanda, who calls her experience as an Angus junior "awesome."

"We like the people, the



scholarship programs and the whole realm of Angus opportunities that were open for the girls," Mindy adds.

Amanda and Kirbe both served on the National Junior Angus Board (NJAB), with Kirbe serving from 2008 to 2010 and as chairman her final year. Amanda served on the NJAB from 2005 to 2007, serving her final year as Angus Foundation director.

"They really enjoyed it," Brad adds. "It was a really good stepping stone for them."

For Amanda, the showring was her primary area of interest.

"I wanted to be in the stalls instead of the contests," she says.

Amanda says she accomplished her dream of running for the NJAB through skills she gained through NJAA activities.

"Through my NJAB experience, I met so many people and became close with Milford [Jenkins, Angus Foundation president]," she adds. "The networking and people skills allowed me to open my wings a bit. Being on the NJAB helped me to be more social."

'Making it'

Over the years, the Schnoor family has experienced much success — both in and out of the showring. The Schnoor girls also represented California at the NJAS showmanship contest.

“At the NJAS, when you see the green coats and regional managers and everyone is so welcoming — I knew I wanted to be part of it.” — Amanda Schnoor

“We’ve had a lot of highlights,” Brad says.

Brad credits the people in the Angus industry who have touched the Schnoor family: the Worthingtons and Colemans from Vintage Angus; Bob Funk and Jarold Callahan from Express Ranches; the Sankeys and Damerons, and more.

“We’ve learned a lot, and they’ve impacted our lives in different aspects,” Mindy says. “We’ve been very blessed.”

“We were always told that you’ve made it in the Angus industry if you can breed your own cattle and show in bred-and-owned [divisions],” she adds.

Daughter Amanda took that goal to heart, and succeeded far beyond the family’s expectations. Not only did they win champion bred-and-owned (B&O) junior heifer at the NJAS in 2013, but they won reserve grand champion B&O junior heifer in 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2016.

“Winning the NJAS in Kansas City in 2013, that was the height of it all,” Brad says.

“It’s been great to have advice from individuals in the American Angus Association,” Mindy says.

Giving youth opportunities

With their daughters so heavily involved in junior activities, the Schnoors have developed a deep appreciation for the Angus Foundation and its efforts to benefit youth.

“When Milford calls, we’ve always given,” Brad says. “We feel it’s a good opportunity for youth to do things that they normally wouldn’t get to do.”

The family played an integral role in the 2009 Leaders Engaged in

Angus Development (LEAD) conference, opening their home to conference participants.

“The kids were so thankful to us for hosting them,” Brad says. “They got to experience a lot of other Angus operations in the area, as well.”

They have also donated many items to the Angus Foundation silent auction and sponsored holes at the annual Angus Foundation golf tournament.

“The Angus Foundation benefits the youth coming up in the agriculture industry,” Mindy says. “If we can bring any kind of youth into the Angus breed, then we need to promote that.”

Mindy states that promoting youth in the agriculture industry is the key to the industry’s future success, and the Angus Foundation does a great job promoting agriculture.

For Brad, supporting the Angus Foundation is an easy choice because the organization is not influenced by outside political forces — unlike what he’s seen on the state level with other youth agriculture groups.

“In California, we see a lot of nonagricultural issues that are pushing ag groups to change,” Brad adds. “We don’t see that happening with Angus.”

The family credits Jenkins with being the driving force behind the Angus Foundation’s continued success.

“Milford is wonderful to work with,” Brad says.

“It takes someone like Milford, who’s always talking to different folks and is very approachable,” Mindy adds. “He’s a very strong asset to the Angus Foundation, and we truly enjoy working with him.”

Schnoor sisters today

The Schnoor sisters are all grown up, but still actively involved in the agriculture industry. Amanda, 31, teaches agriculture at Modesto Junior College, manages the family Angus herd and has judged at some local and regional shows. Kirbe, 28, works for Superior Livestock and is the host of *Superior Sunrise* and produces *American Rancher* for RFD-TV. Sydney, 21, is majoring in animal science and agricultural business at Oklahoma State University.

Amanda’s Angus youth experiences also pointed her to her career path, which includes teaching marketing, agricultural business management and agricultural economics classes.

“Being on the NJAB, I realized I loved helping kids find their future,” she says. “That pushed me to go into education and be there for young people who have a passion for ag like I do.”

“At this point, we [parents Brad and Mindy] are just the cheerleaders, you could say,” Mindy says.

The three young ladies are all interested in giving back to the industry that gave them their start, Mindy says.

Although the Schnoor family no longer has any Angus juniors, their commitment to the Angus Foundation and other Angus youth remains.

“We’re still active in raising funds for the Angus Foundation and selling cattle to junior Angus exhibitors,” Amanda says. “We want to help juniors who have the passion and love for the cattle industry.” [AJ](#)

Editor’s Note: For more information on giving to the Angus Foundation, visit www.angusfoundation.org.