



Frog Legs and RIBEYE STEAKS

Investments of today are helping a West Virginia family ensure a future for the next generation.

by Megan Silveira, assistant editor

The view starts at the porch, where visitors and family members can stand and overlook the entire farm, sitting on what Matt Teets proudly describes as “cattle country.” Though the weather’s the perfect temperature — not too hot, not too cold — and the cattle on green grass are a scenic view, most guests are drawn in to the 20,000-square-foot facility behind them.

The state-inspected butcher shop at Teets Cattle Company currently processes about 60 beef a month, along with hogs, sheep and goats. While the facility’s doors have only been open since May 2022, the butcher shop has already paid dividends to its owners.

For the Teets family, the benefit is more than just financial. The shop is just one way Matt and Jill are setting up a future for their three sons — Justin, 19; J.W., 17; and Jordan, 15 — all who express interest in continuing their lineage’s legacy in the beef industry.

Though Lost River, W. Va., is a great place to run a cattle herd, Matt says the area doesn’t offer a lot of space left for expansion. New good farm ground is scarce, and whatever is available is already being leased out.

Matt had grown up with neighbors who helped his family butcher cattle, and it was a task that he found interesting. Experience and a growing demand for home-grown beef sparked the idea for the butcher shop four years ago.

PHOTOS BY SWEET BRIAR CREATIVE, COURTESY OF THE TEETS FAMILY.

“We had to expand somewhere, and this seemed like the fit that we needed,” Matt says of the butcher shop.

Located close to Washington D.C., the farm has access to a market of tourists and locals who have an appetite for fresh, home-grown beef. Jill says it’s an opportunity to promote a premier protein while also living out “the farm to table” mentality.

“I have tried to kind of push the thought of agritourism,” she says, which isn’t surprising considering her background.

Her family owns Smoke Hole Caverns and Log Cabin Resort, so the tourism business is second nature. For Jill, however, the farm takes on a more personal note.

“My dream before I ever met Matt — I always wanted to live on an actual farm,” she admits. “I did say I always wanted a pretty farm.”

Once the duo got married, that dream became Jill’s reality. With 600 brood cows to tend to, a short stint with a few turkey houses, annual bull sales, partnered production sales, and the comings and goings of the caverns and resort, the calendar quickly filled up.

As their sons joined the picture, the list of activities on and off the farm continued to grow. All three boys are active in basketball, baseball and golf. Justin currently attends Redlands Junior College, so most of his free time is spent in Oklahoma. The two boys at home raise vegetables and hanging baskets in addition to cattle and crops. J.W. has recently taken on welding, and both he and Jordan help with the tourism operations and a newly started repair shop.

“We don’t really try to do things necessarily,” Jill says with a chuckle. “I mean, obviously you try to make your things productive ... but we just kind of like to tackle new things and tasks. As soon as we get one thing done, we’re like ‘OK, let’s try this’ and ‘let’s try that.’”

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J.W., Jordan, Jill, Justin and Matt Teets

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Jill Teets is proud of the home she's built with her family. She describes the growth as a "team effort."

As most parents can attest, life for Matt and Jill has become more and more about how they can be the best parents to their children. Each decision, each new business venture, is a way to help the boys become more well-rounded, uncover a new passion or feel secure in their futures.

Farming or frogging

"When we take over the farm and the butcher shop, we're going to switch to frogs."

The running joke makes every member of the Teets family laugh, but Jordan's quick to reiterate how lucky he feels to be a part of every segment of their operation. Though the butcher shop could certainly go through more frogs than cattle, there's no way Jordan or his brothers would leave behind their biggest passion.

Love for agriculture was fostered in each of them since birth, but J.W. says it was the trips they all took with their dad out West that solidified the beef industry as their home. These excursions to view cattle featured in big online sales served as core memories and helped the brothers find their niche back home.

For the oldest Teets boy, it's all about the seedstock calves.

"You can't keep Justin out of the barn," J.W. jokes.

Justin confirms, saying he loves spending time with calves, making breeding decisions, communicating with customers and all the work that comes with show day.

"I like trying to get cattle to the best of their abilities," he explains.

On the other hand, J.W. prefers to be out in the field.

"I'd say running the equipment and working the ground and farmland is my favorite part," the middle child says. "I've just always kind of known that that's what I was going to do ever since I've been around. There's not really any part of it that I don't enjoy."

Jordan rounds out the crowd, and though he has a hand in helping break calves, his biggest smiles appear when he's in the butcher shop. As one of the head butchers, Jordan plays a role in the entire process, from knocking and skinning to pinpointing specialty cuts.





Echoing his older brother, Jordan says there's never been another path for him than continuing to grow the family operation.

"It didn't really cross my mind of doing something else," he says. "It's just always been about the farm."

While Justin is off at school, he can't wait to get back to West Virginia. There's always more to do and more to grow at home, and he appreciates the trust that comes with co-workers who are also family.

Plans for the boys' future circle around expansion, particularly with the butcher shop.

While Justin says "it's been an adventure" so far, he and his brothers want the journey to continue. The shop currently sells to a few local restaurants and provides nearby school cafeterias with beef to serve to students.

"It good to know we're putting quality meat out there for people to eat," Justin says. "It's just good beef."

Jordan continues to push for creative ways to provide their products to new consumers. He scrolls through social media for new ideas to catch people's eye. The latest endeavor? Heart-shaped ribeye specials for Valentine's Day.

J.W. says he and his siblings look forward to promoting beef to more people as they grow older and take on more responsibilities. That forward-thinking mindset is applied to the cattle herd, as well.

"Hopefully one day we'll be raising some national champions," he says of plans to improve herd genetics and build up their donor program.

With a personal soft spot for the seedstock business, Matt looks onto his kids' vision of the future with pride.

Lessons he taught the boys on those road trips when they were young are philosophies they apply in the barn today.

He and his boys work to stay consistent in the type and cattle they select for, because having a great starting point each breeding season helps ensure the best of calves hit the ground. Thankfully, the black-hided cattle of the company don't just look good in the pasture — they help the Teets family complete their mission of getting the best beef from the farm all the way to the table.

"I don't think anybody in the cattle business would argue that the Angus cow is the best female out there," Matt says.

For Matt and Jill, there's no better feeling than watching their boys invest in themselves and the family businesses. No matter the season or the project, all three brothers apply the same determination and dedication.

"It's not a job for them," Matt explains.

The family business has never been a requirement for the boys, but Jill says she can't help but smile when she thinks about the love all three of them have for the farm.

"We are both thrilled that they have the willingness," she says.

Convincing them to stay home for chores might be like pulling teeth, and Jill might have to endure a few more jokes about selling frog legs instead of ground beef, but she says she wouldn't change it for the world.

The ability to live her childhood dream of having her own pretty farm and sharing that dream with her children is more than she could have ever hoped for. **AJ**