

Guy Kynerd (left) owns and operates Clayhill Angus, Meridian, Miss., and Kirk Stock is the farm's manager.

When Guy Kynerd, Meridian, Miss., entered the cattle business, he solicited professional advice, then heeded that advice. He developed a game plan suited to his situation and pocketbook, and he stuck to it. He kept records. He hired good help. In a nutshell, he applied principles learned in other businesses to the business of raising cattle.

As a result, in its 5-year existence, the Kynerd family's Clayhill Angus has progressed steadily toward establishing itself as an important seed stock producer.

The American Angus Assn. and its personnel played (and, for that matter, are still playing) an important role in that progress; regional managers and other staff members were the professionals from whom Kynerd sought advice. They guided him in his purchases, encouraged him to get involved in local associations. They explained the national association's performance program. They advised him in his breeding and merchandising plans. They helped him locate his herd manager. "They filled in for my lack of knowledge," Kynerd says. "All I had to do was listen." And the association employees were simply doing their jobs.

#### Wanted Nothing to do With Cattle

Although the land on which Clayhill Angus is situated has been in the family since Kynerd's great-grandfather's day, until the mid-1970s Kynerd took little interest in the farm, a fact he attributes to an incident that involved his helping cut a dead calf from a cow. He was 16 at the time, didn't much like the chore and decided he wanted no part of the cattle, a decision he held to for the next 32 years.

Kynerd spent a good share of those years in a farm equipment business, in truck leasing and in a Mack truck dealership. And he

# CLAYHILL ANGUS

by Ann Gooding

*Mississippi cattleman Guy Kynerd developed a game plan suited to his situation and pocketbook, and he stuck to it. Now, after only five years in the registered business, he has his operation under control. And he's come a long way.*

kept his father's farm records. Then in 1973, Kynerd's father put the farm in trust for Guy and wife Jane's two children, Clay and Rebecca. Kynerd was made trustee and under the arrangement could, and subsequently did, rent the pasture.

There had always been a few commercial black cows around the farm, Kynerd says; but from his vantage point as bookkeeper, he was aware their money-making ability didn't always surpass, or for that matter equal, related expenses.

#### The Switch to Purebreds

So by the time 1974 and its low cattle prices rolled around, Kynerd had decided to put purebred cattle on the farm, thanks in part to the theory that a purebred cow has no more appetite but more profit potential

than a commercial cow, and in part to encouragement from long-time friend and Angus breeder Reggie Dufour.

It was Dufour, in fact, who put Kynerd in touch with Charles Crochet, then that area's American Angus Assn. regional manager. And Kynerd put Crochet and his association to work.

With guidance primarily from Crochet, Kynerd started buying registered Angus. The first 15 were purchased in the Howell-Gibbs dispersion at Dothan, Ala. More came from the OxBow dispersion, Bogalusa, La., the Rae Ferrell dispersion at Vienna, Ga., and the Landmark herd, Greenville, S.C. And Kynerd bought his first herd bull, Menteith of Graham 108, from Graham Angus Farm, Albany, Ga., with the assistance of regional manager Johnny Crouch.

In 1976 Kynerd bought cattle at Briarhill Angus Farm, Union Springs, Ala., and at Grahams. Cows from the Kinloch Farm dispersion, Supply, Va., and from Macedon Farms, Madison, Ala.; Black Champ Enterprises, Waxatchie, Texas; and Belle Point Ranch, Lavaca, Ark., were added as were other individuals from various sales as recommended by regional managers.

#### **Bull Purchases**

After searching several herds with Crochet, Kynerd selected and purchased Briarhill Norcol in December of 1976. A trip to the 1978 Wye Plantation dispersion brought in another herd bull, Fireball of Wye. (With assistance from three regional managers who were at the sale, this individual was chosen to add a performance tested bull to the Clayhill program.)

Later Kynerd discussed his program with Richard Dyar (that area's regional manager since 1978) and asked him to help find the next bull. As a result, Rally Patriot 5039 was added in March 1980.

The quest for bulls continues and just recently Kynerd (along with Bell Farms, Sarah, Miss.; E.J. Gibbs, Cantonment, Fla.; Dave Nichols, Anita, Iowa; and Waddell Angus, Rogersville, Ala.) bought Hundred Oaks Rito, top performing and all-time high selling bull at the Clemson University test.

With initial purchases behind him, Kynerd began developing Clayhill Angus. Crochet put him in touch with Kirk Stock, an Iowa native who joined Clayhill as manager in 1978. As he would have in any other business, Kynerd let his manager work without interference—he let him make his own decisions, run some of his own cattle. In return, Stock has done and is doing a good job, and both he and his wife Bulah have become important parts of the operation. Bulah, in fact, recently took a course in photography at Kynerd's encouragement and Clayhill has a resident livestock photographer.

#### **Performance Enters the Picture**

Crochet also put Kynerd in touch with performance programs. On his visits to the performance-oriented Graham herd, Kynerd was impressed with the fact that rec-

ords could sell cattle. Then when he attended an association-sponsored meeting explaining the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) program, Kynerd was sold.

Once Kynerd had made his initial purchases, hired a manager and determined the direction of his program, his energies turned to establishing a strong genetic base, the base that will give Clayhill Angus its own identity.

To begin with he rotated bulls, breeding each cow to each herd bull, then basing future matings on the offsprings' performance records. He also relied on performance information in culling. And he kept his top home-grown bulls to be used in his breeding program. He gives an example of how his system works—"If we bred a 108 daughter to Norcol and got a real good calf, then that cow will be bred back to a son of Norcol on the theory that the son should breed better than his sire." So far Kynerd is satisfied with the results and intends to continue with this program.

#### **A.I. Could Become Important**

Until last fall, artificial insemination to outside bulls was a very small part of the Clayhill program, not because Kynerd was opposed to A.I. or to the use of outside bulls but because he felt he had little or nothing on which to base bull selection. He studied show and sale reports, he says, but he didn't feel they supplied the information he needed.

Kynerd, however, wanted to A.I. and for several reasons. First, he says, it is an excellent means of broadening a herd's genetic base and, second, there's always the chance that an outstanding bull calf will be produced.

Unfortunately, though, what little artificial inseminating had been done at Clayhill had produced disappointing

results. However, the American Angus Assn. AHIR Field Data Report that came out last November prompted Kynerd to try again. Using as a selection guide the report (which evaluates 564 bulls on the basis of their progenies' performance), he bred 40 cows to either Sayre Patriot, Jetliner 707 of Conanga or Byergos Black Revolution 36. Each of the 40 cows had had at least three calves and they all had been on AHIR at least three years. He had a special reason for selecting those cows; because of past records, their 1981 calves will give him a basis for comparing his own bulls with what are considered some of the breed's best.

#### **Professional Health Care**

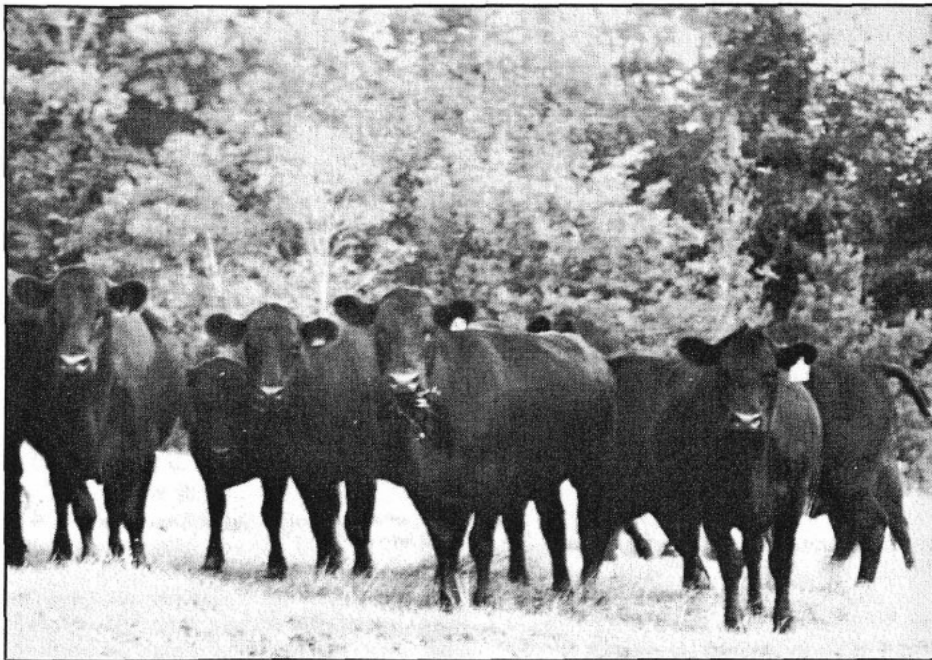
Kynerd has a complete herd health program. He has contracted a nearby veterinarian to maintain herd health and has given him free rein to do whatever he thinks needs to be done. According to Kynerd, the arrangement is working very well. The veterinarian is happy because he's been given freedom to practice his profession, and Kynerd is happy because he has a top-notch health program.

And Kynerd has done more than establish breeding and health programs in the last five years. He's also been planning promotion and merchandising.

And those, at least in part, are related to Kynerd's involvement in Angus organizations and activities. He was advised, he says, to become active in local and state Angus organizations. And he did—Guy's and Jane's are familiar faces now at both state and national Angus events.

He was instrumental in helping regional manager Dyar reorganize the Mississippi Angus Assn. and is now the group's secretary. He is president of the South Mississippi Angus Assn. and has attended the American Angus Assn. annual meeting as a

*The Clayhill operation is based on cows selected with performance in mind.*



delegate for several years. This year he provided an Angus bull for the Mississippi Cattlemen's Assn. fund-raising sale (the cattlemen's group kept half the proceeds). His, the last bull in the ring, topped the 8-breed sale.

#### Helped Establish NEMBERS

Kynerd took an active role last year in helping establish the North East Mississippi Bull Evaluation Station, the first of its kind in the state. Dyar was instrumental in getting the thing started, Kynerd says, and he helped by trying to interest other breeders in consigning bulls as well as by supplying extra bulls to fill the manager's quota. His bulls did well and the test is off to a good start, with its second sale coming up in April.

Then last summer Clayhill was an employer in the Angus association's summer job placement program. Kynerd had reservations, he says, and it was only due to association Director of Junior Activities Jerry Lipsey's and Dyar's insistence that he participated. But he says he was very pleased with the results—the young man he hired, Mark Weekley, worked out so well that he took over Clayhill management for a week at Christmas so Stock could take a vacation. And Kynerd intends to continue employing young people through the association program.

#### Activities Are Important

Kynerd has, in fact, become involved in just about anything that has to do with Angus. And there are several good reasons. These activities and organizations are important to the breed, he believes, and that's important to him and to his business. But more than that—his participation helps promote and merchandise his cattle.

Although his merchandising program is geared to private treaty sales, Kynerd participates in association sales to get the Clayhill name and cattle in front of the public. "We felt we had to introduce the cows and the farm to the people in this area," Kynerd says, "and buyers at these sales are mostly from Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi. We try to have the best cows in the sale every year, and every year we've been in it (the South Mississippi Angus Assn. sale) we have had the top selling animal."

Kynerd does consign only his best, something for which Crochet is responsible. "He told me," Kynerd says, "if you don't sell good ones at these sales, don't sell anything." The first couple years, in fact, Kynerd let Crochet pick the Clayhill consignment and, says Kynerd, "I didn't like getting rid of what I got rid of. But they did a real respectable job for us. Then this last year we had a pair we raised that topped the sale at \$2,050. We thought that was fairly impressive because these sales usually average around \$1,000. The best part, though, is that the buyer came to the farm later and bought a heifer private treaty for his daughter to show, then turned around and bought the heifer's mother."

Kynerd also consigns to the Mississippi BCIA sale but with a different approach. Because this sale brings in all kinds of buyers—those who want a bull at \$2,500 to those who can't spend more than \$800-\$900—Kynerd consigns five bulls. They will grade five different grades, he says, and they sell to five different kinds of buyers, giving Clayhill cattle exposure and expanding the Clayhill market.

This leads to Kynerd's real interest—merchandising groups at private treaty. He advertises "Better Buys by the Bunch" and has groups available for sale at all times. These animals are kept in a pasture near the house; there's a price on them, and a buyer can take them or leave them. This system has several advantages for the buyer, Kynerd feels, because no one is subjected to high-pressure sales. And the buyer can see the sale animals' parents. Besides that, with no auction expense, savings can be passed on to the customer.

And there are advantages for Kynerd. If a buyer doesn't want the special sale group, at least after a visit he is familiar with Clayhill Angus. He may come back later—or he may see something else he wants. Kynerd has, in fact, already sold cattle that way—like his entire half-blood herd. A visitor, there to look at other cattle, saw the herd, liked it and bought it.

#### The Brahman Influence

The half-bloods, by the way, are Kynerd's concession to the Brahman influence in the south, something he says purebred cattlemen there not only have to live with but should capitalize on. "My theory," Kynerd says, "is that everybody wants to donate us half of the business because they want to base their crosses on Angus cows. And somebody's got to raise that Angus cow." And he adds, "It is a fact that some Angus cows work better genetically in the F<sub>1</sub> (first-cross Angus-Brahman) program than they do in a purebred program. So by crossbreeding we are simply reaching to capitalize all of the market we can."

Kynerd's ultimate criteria for sale cattle, he says, is that every one be Clayhill bred.

Up to this point he's still building his herd and, consequently, has not had all that many to sell. That soon will change.

The 140-head Clayhill herd probably will reach its goal of 150 next year. Then Kynerd intends to select, via performance records, the top 10% of the heifer calf crop as replacements, then cull cows with poor performance or who are non-breeders. The bottom 25% of the heifer calves also will be culled.

(And Kynerd doesn't take any chances that his culls may end up in someone's breeding herd. The females—without so much as a trip through the local sale barn—go straight to slaughter. Bull calves not measuring up to Kynerd's standards become steers.)

#### All Set to Go

By next fall or early next year, Kynerd will be ready—for the first time—to sell a num-

ber of females. Buyers will be told they are choosing from among the middle 65%, that the top 10% have been retained and the bottom 25% culled. Records will be an important part of the sales.

Kynerd, a graduate from Mississippi State University in business administration, with a minor in accounting, is Clayhill's resident expert on records. His system, though simple, is complete; it's based on three things—a cattle working guide, individual cow records and an AHIR form. Kynerd insists on an open-record policy, so all are made available to prospective buyers.

The cattle working guide is just what the name implies—a management tool on which are kept records of health actions, pregnancy checks and the like. Incidentally, Kynerd carries a small tape recorder with him and records information as he gathers it. That way, he says, he doesn't have to worry about forgetting something by the time he gets back to the office or about losing a notebook.

AHIR information is kept on small forms (once used by the Angus association) with pedigree on the front, performance information on the back.

Then a sheet is kept on each female. And there, for all the world to see, is her history, her progeny information, her health records, her cost (if purchased) and a depreciation schedule.

#### Investment Credit Advantage

A depreciation schedule is not always a part of cattle records, but according to Kynerd, it probably should be. Depreciation, he explains, justifies investment credit and, without going into great detail, that's a direct deduction from taxes owed, created by the government to stimulate investments. "If people have an income that's going to make them pay taxes," Kynerd says, "investment credit can save them some money." Kynerd bases depreciation on eight years (12½% a year), assuming a cow will produce from age two to age 10. Adjustments are made, of course, if a cow older than two is purchased. And although depreciation and investment credit may not apply to every situation, Kynerd recommends looking into it.

The records Kynerd keeps—the working guide and the individual cow records—plus cancelled checks to prove expenses are enough to satisfy anyone, from customers to the IRS (who, according to Kynerd, recently finished an audit during which they made no changes).

So from record keeping to merchandising, breeding and health programs, Kynerd has his operation under control and he has only owned registered cattle for five years. But by treating his cattle operation as if it were a business and by relying on professional advice and by planning, he's come a long way in those five years.

Now he and son Clay are both involved in work on the farm. More land has been added to the operation. And Clayhill Angus is off to a good start. 