



Perfection or shortcuts? Sometimes, it's simply . . .

A Matter of Priorities

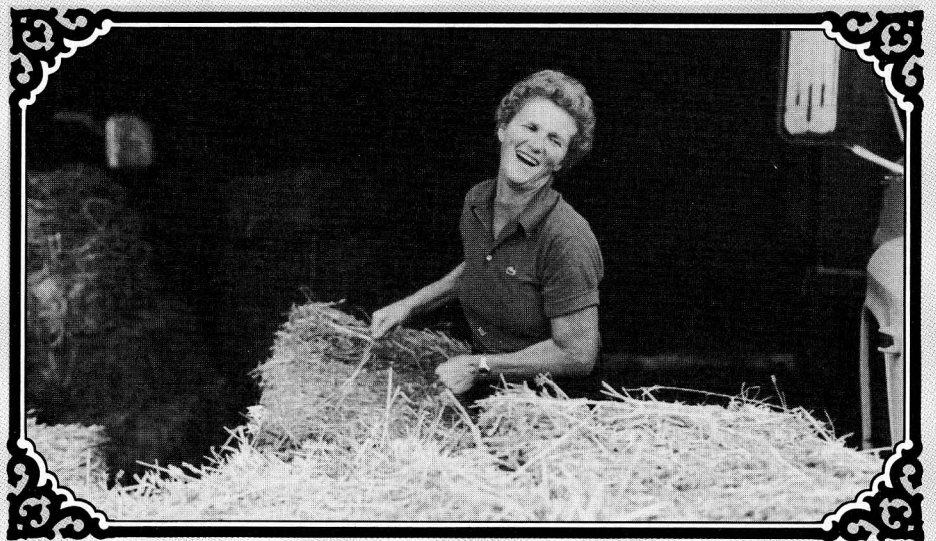
by Jim Cotton, Editor

It wasn't a shortcut that got Evelyn Edmunds in trouble. Rather, it was grooming that one innocent little project a shade too close to perfection.

There was a mowing job on a ditchbank. Evelyn decided the hired man wasn't doing it quite to suit her, so being the end of the day, she sent him on home and took her turn on the tractor with the objective of doing things just a bit better.

"I was driving a John Deere with a pull-type bush hog. I went up the ridge, and that tractor reared like a horse—I used to show horses, so I rode it right to the ground. This leg was pinned under the tractor which was still running.

"I reached up and shut it off, and then I remember looking up into the sky and it was just so



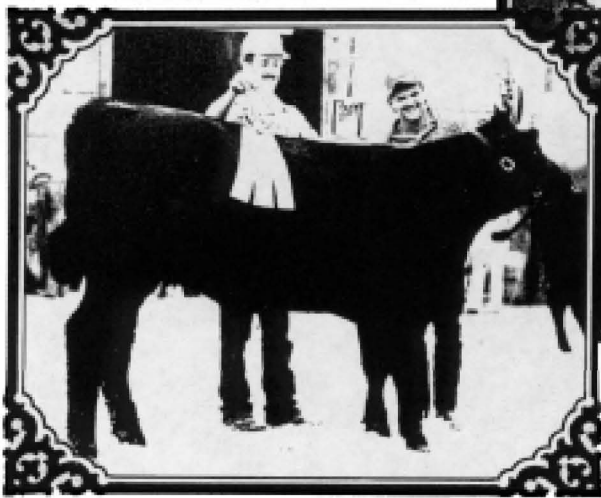
Mrs. Evelyn Edmunds, Circle E Farm
Clover, South Carolina

"Encouraging young people has been reward enough. The lives of my own have been directed in positive ways, largely I feel through their association with the Angus industry."

"Their positive attitudes, the enthusiasm they undertake with everyday problems plus the numerous friendships they've made really make this a worthwhile venture."

There are six Edmunds children, Lynn is married to John Campbell, a tax attorney from Greenville, SC. They have a 17-month-old daughter, "Wee Wesley"—"I hope to have a halter in her hand in a few years," says Evelyn. Leigh is Mrs. Kelly Harris. Her husband practices dentistry at Ashboro, N. C. Leigh teaches in the Dental Assisting Program, Central Piedmont College, Charlotte, N. C.

Allen works at South Carolina Medical University, Charleston, as a medical technologist in the immunology lab. Johnna is a service technician in the poultry division of Gold Kist in Silver City, N.C. And, Lane is a service technician in the poultry division of Cargill in Fayetteville, Ar. Wesley is at Circle E Farm.



pretty and blue. I lay there about 45 minutes, always on the verge of passing out.

"That was before we had these turkey houses, and we ranged turkeys at the time. Now, when turkeys gobble, you can't hear anything else. But I could hear John (a farm employee) coming on the Yamaha, and I would yell between the gobbles."

Evelyn explained John has some limitations, "but his hearing is very acute. I heard him shut off the Yamaha, open the gate, shut the gate—we had cows grazing there and he was always told to remember the gates. We trained him well," she laughs, "he was so conscientious. And, of course, I'm lying there, ready to scream, 'John, forget the gate!'"

"He came over and asked me what I wanted him to do. And I said for him to go back to the house and get help, 'I'm probably going to pass out.'"

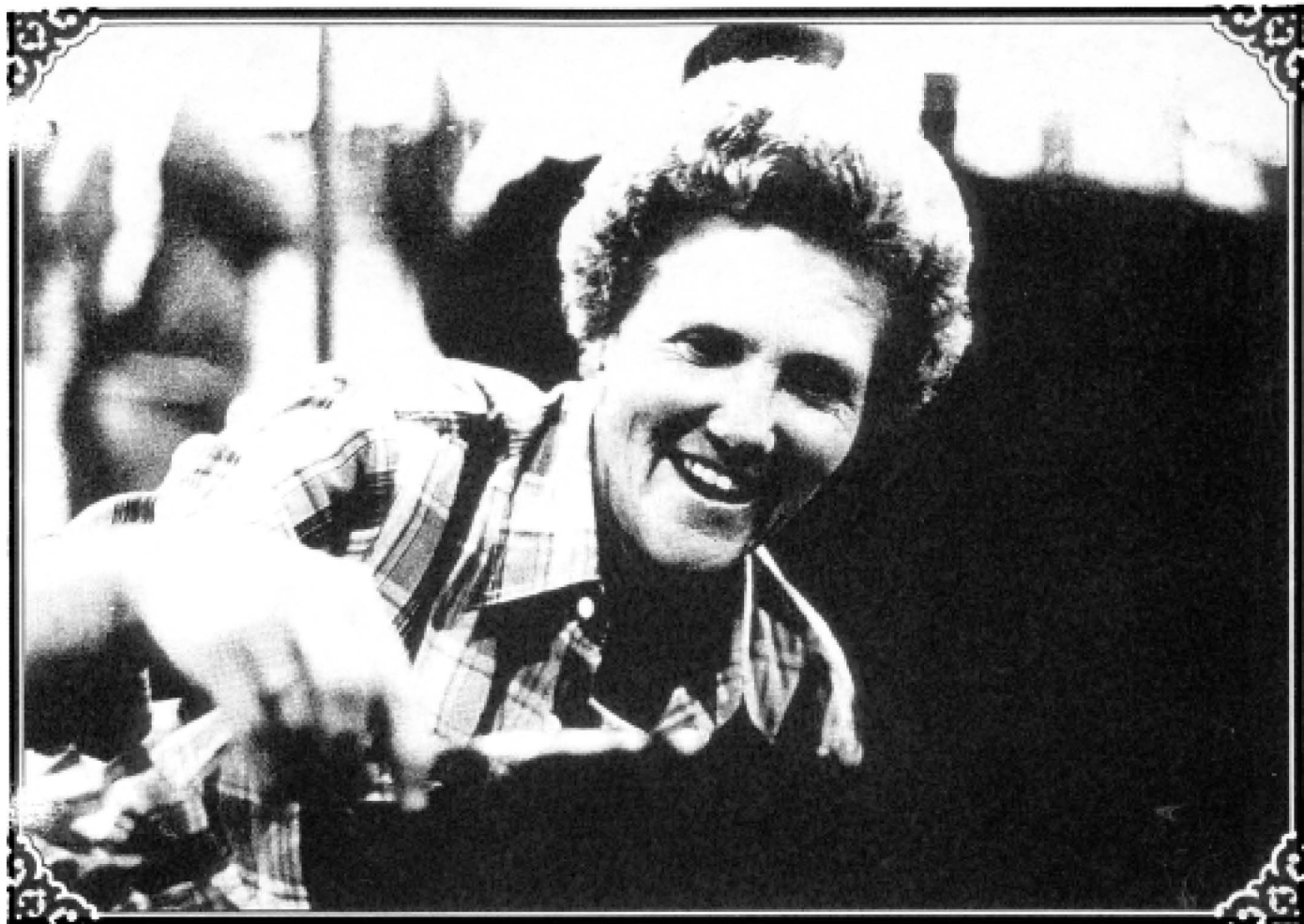
"And that scared him so, he left me and he opened the gate, and he closed the gate, of course, and went back.

"Johnny (Mr. Edmunds) was taking his exercise near the farm's airplane hanger. Everyone came back with timbers and chains and got me out in time. That tractor was nearly to go on over."

Disaster averted. It was September 1978. In November of that year, John Edmunds passed away and the family faced another pivotal crisis.

Looking back, Evelyn Edmunds and the children weathered it characteristically one concludes from the example, memories, and the family fiber toughened by pulling together. The Angus herd begun in 1970 provided stability, continuity, a sense of purpose. By the time of their father's death, the Edmunds children had made breed activities and devotion part of the family routine and expectations;

"I'd like to continue encouraging the youth of our state to enter the Angus business. Their enthusiasm for this breed can be a powerful force—I've seen that myself."



what else to do but carry on?

The registered herd was established with a show heifer package which Evelyn remembers as costing between \$350 and \$600 a head. Since there were six children each needing an animal, care not to exceed the budget was important.

"We purchased a heifer for Allen—Maymont Blackbird—a Colossal daughter from Virginia. This animal was undefeated in class and went on to produce an A.I. calf in 1973 by Emulous Master. This was our first A.I. offspring and became our herd bull in two years. He was 'Schroder.'

The second calf, 'Snyder' by Marshall Legend became a herd bull at a Charleston, South Carolina herd. The third, 'Schultz' went to the Bradshaws in Hickory, North Carolina, as another herd bull.

"We've retained all their daughters. We also bought a White

Hall heifer for Leigh that proved to be excellent foundation stock."

Eye appeal and frame size have been important Circle E selection objectives. However, Evelyn confides selection for frame alone created a detour that almost developed into a dead-end.

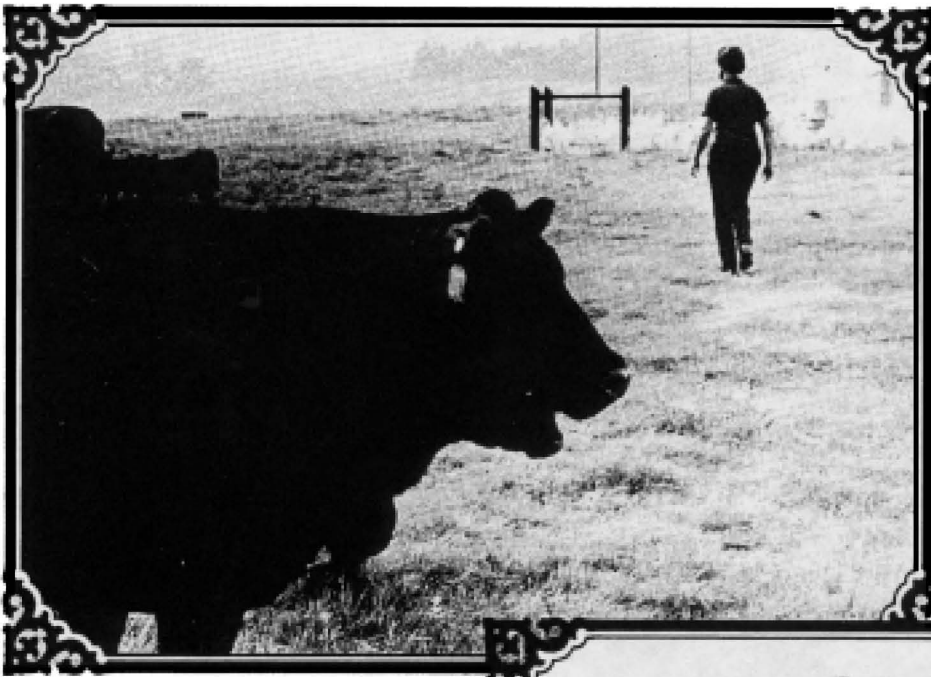
"In 1978," she says, "we purchased a young bull that certainly changed the frame size of our herd, only to deplete the milk. It has taken us three years to get back to basics.

"We retained many of his daughters with that excellent frame size only to find they didn't milk. If I could do it over I would keep frame size within reason, making sure the maternal ability survives."

Her experience tempers the enthusiasm she once held for more extreme cattle. She appreciates how trends influence the cattle types of a region.

"I think we need to remember what made Angus number one and

"the closest we came to a national champion was at Nashville in 1977 in the bred and owned class. Johnna's heifer was sired by a son of Spur Emulous Master, a product of Spur Ranch breeding in Oklahoma. This A.I. calf had been born on our farm in January 1973. 'Schroder' became our herd sire after being named calf champion at the South Carolina State Fair in 1973."



One Of the lessons of turkey raising: "You don't take shortcuts. It doesn't pay."

not go overboard for size. I think too many females are being flushed without enough sound reasons for doing so. Our breed will be affected by this down the road. We must be concerned about meeting the needs of the commercial man as well as the registered producer."

As she looks back over the 16 years of Circle E's Angus involvement, she also regrets not using A.I. more extensively in the early '70s. To have been more aggressive with the technique might have helped meet one of the farm goals sooner, that is producing performance cattle with show qualities.

"Most cows in our herd weigh 1,150 to 1,300 pounds. That, we find, is the most desirable weight here. Cattle any larger are not profitable in this area."

One important management effort is to halter break all replacements at weaning. "Our entire herd is very docile," Evelyn points out the importance of tractability. "We're often limited to female help, and it makes it so much better."

For Evelyn Edmunds, it's important she be involved in promoting the breed. Part of fulfilling that goal is assisting young people get started. Youth projects lead to family projects, she's found, and soon someone's



A daughter of Phoebus of Wye, 4 1 F Miss Burgess 5F1 is 14-years-old and "milks her heart out." She's placed three daughters in the Circle E herd. Her April steer calf-at-side is by Perryville Ezzo Extra Evelyn says of the herds complexion: "I have big cows here, big for this area, this part of the South. But, I also have little cows that will wean more than half of their body weight. When you go across the scales, you'd better have that."



Two Ankonian Dynamo daughters. Cow on the left is out of an Eileenmere dam. Her bull calf is sired by Greenbrae Chairman.

Princess Dynamo is bred Ankonian Dynamo on both sides. The butt calf is by PS High Pockets

tacking a sign out front, "So-and-so Farm, Breeders of Angus Cattle." That's satisfaction. In harmony with fellow breeders, she confides she has another goal—better, a dream—one residing in the breast of any producer worth his or her salt:

"To produce that one super calf!"

It hasn't been all ideal or effortless for the Edmunds family. Life has demanded pluck and determination. Thanks to the keen ears of the young man who saved her life, Evelyn Edmunds can now enjoy the Carolina skies be they misty blue or sunset pink. Perhaps that helps keep things in perspective when choosing between the well-ordered or getting the job done. AJ



"Turkeys are the number one priority as they are our money-making crop. As the children left home for college, our time became limited in working with the cattle.

"Up until then, the chores were divided, and we worked the cattle around school schedules. Most decisions regarding the cattle were left to me until the youngest came back home to live.

"We relied on the county extension service and livestock specialist for advice. Also Angus fieldman, John Crouch, left a lasting impression on our entire family. He always listened when you had a problem."



On fishing at the farm pond: "I look forward to the day when I can get in the boat and go out there and fish for a while. But if they don't bite, I don't have the patience for it.

"I always have something else to do. I'm sure I have as much time as anyone else, it's just a matter of priorities."