

*Charles Garney and managing-partner Mark Richardson discuss the similar courses the Sayre and Garney herds have been on. "If we didn't know better, somebody would have thought this merger was planned two or three years in advance," they say.*

# A New Beginning at Garney Cattle Co.

by Linda Wells

The similarities between Garney Cattle Co. at Afton, Okla., and the former operation at Sayre Farms, Phelps, N.Y., are (as Charles Garney puts it) "uncanny." Garney, the owner of Garney Cattle Co., and Mark Richardson, long-time manager of Sayre Farms and present managing-partner at Garney, discovered that these two sets of cattle have been on similar courses in many ways. For instance, Garney was one of the first herds to use Sayre Patriot, a bull Sayre Farms bred and claimed grand championships with across the country. Continental, another bull Sayre exhibited this past year at major shows and used in their herd, also was used on Garney cows. By the same token, Sayre Farms used General JJ Patton in their breeding program; and Garney owns one-third interest in him.

"If we didn't know better, somebody would have thought we planned this whole thing two or three years in advance," say Garney and Richardson. But they didn't. Everything just happened to fall into place. Bulls used in their breeding programs were not the only things the two firms had in common; the *type* of cattle selected and retained also are similar. The females are long, flat in their muscle structure and very angular in addition to having length of neck and sound udders. "These are the type of things we tried to emphasize at Sayre," states Richardson, "and they're also being emphasized here at Garney."

Garney Cattle Co. covers 1,050 acres and, as strange as it may seem, the terrain and landscape have certain similarities to the area in New York where the Sayre herd was situated. The rolling hills and patches

of timber combined with open space offer certain parallels between the two locations. And there's Grand Lake, running up to the edge of the Garney pastures, that is similar to the Finger Lakes of New York not far from Sayre Farms.

## Temperature

The big difference, logically enough, is the temperature. "The summer days in New York can get pretty hot," explains Richardson, "but the nights always cool off." Not so in Oklahoma. Last year Garney reported that temperatures reached 100° or more for 37 days in a row. And the nights don't cool off much either—maybe 2-3° at the most. Consequently, the Sayre cattle are going through an environmental adjustment which Richardson estimates will take close to a year or more.

Before acquiring the Sayre herd a few months ago, Garney Cattle Co. had 300 females in addition to 50-60 breeding-age heifers. With the Sayre herd, numbers will reach close to 450. Richardson states that future plans are to bring the number back down to 300, but now they will maintain 450 and cut back later, possibly near the end of the year.

Some of the Sayre cattle were shipped to Oklahoma in late February. Those cows that had calved just previous to the first of March and those continuing to calve through March made the trip in mid-April. Yet another group of cows calving even later—such as Sayre Patriots Lena, whose transplant calves were born in April and her natural calf in late May, all by General JJ Patton—will be brought to Oklahoma after they've had time to grow and become

strong enough to weather the trip. "We weren't all that concerned about summer calves in New York. But in Oklahoma, it will be a different story. They won't do as well in Oklahoma as they would have in New York. To help remedy this problem in the future, all our summer-calving cows will be put into the fall calving season," states Richardson.

## A Performance Reputation

"Garney Cattle Co. has a reputation as being a performance herd," states Garney. "We have been very conscientious about keeping good records on our cattle and have done a lot of testing, emphasizing weaning and yearling weights." The basic philosophy is to get the most dollars of production per acre of grassland. And Garney says their land will carry one cow per 3 acres. "We've survived drouths and still have been able to make it in good shape," he states.

"Our cattle have to be fertile. We try to calve our heifers at two years of age. Easy-calving sound cattle, females with good udders—these are the main things we have been working toward. And we feel that the Sayre cattle will allow us to continue this program in a competitive way," Garney explains.

Seven months before purchasing the Sayre cattle, even before the thought came up, Garney invested in a truck and trailer for the purpose of putting together a show string. So the decision to become more show oriented came about before the Sayre herd was purchased. "We feel that you can do both. You can produce cattle that are popular in the show ring and at the same

time produce cattle for economic traits," Garney emphasizes.

Richardson's personal goals and philosophies coincide with those expressed by Garney. "And that is to achieve a standard of excellence," comments Richardson. "By that we mean the excellence that encompasses more than one particular trait and more than one objective. I expect the show ring to be an important part of our program, but along with that, we will certainly continue to emphasize performance and other economic traits such as fertility and milking ability. All of these things are involved in performance."

#### Meaning of Performance

Performance to Richardson, however, means more than weight per day of age. It's the ability of a cow to cycle, to be bred, milk and raise a calf. "People have in their minds there are show cattle and there are performance cattle—but they're the same thing," says Richardson. This philosophy holds true at Garney Cattle Co. They have performance cattle and they show them. "The cattle that are winning in the show ring today are performance cattle. Our hope is to emphasize performance and be competitive in the show ring," Richardson adds.

Garney agrees: "With the addition of the Sayre cattle, we are going to continue to give prominence to performance and economic traits in a more nationally competitive way."

The ranch's test station is referred to, instead, as a bull development station. Simply because that's what it is. It's also a good example of the efficiency and economics Garney believes in. The station's location, design and objectives are tools to achieve the performance, yet individuality, Garney and Richardson are striving for in their cattle.

The station is situated in a heavily wooded area. Trees were left in the area for a purpose—to protect bulls from the sun in the summer and wind in the winter. It also was built on a hill. This was done to allow good drainage and to give the bulls plenty of exercise going up and down the slope. The area covers 2 acres with a permanent working facility and scales. Richardson is pleased with the facility. "With the handling facility and scale in front of the station, it is quite convenient to handle the bulls and treat any problems. We can weigh about 25 bulls in 30 minutes," he says. His hope is to put all Garney bulls through the development station.

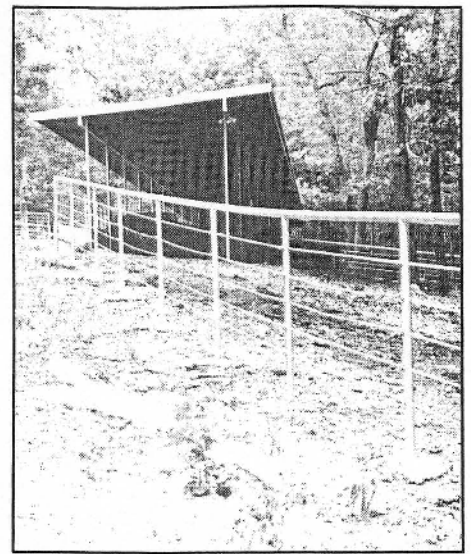
#### Designed for Customers

The station was designed with the customer in mind. Garney's first objective was to manage and develop the entire bull calf crop in one location for better comparative growth data. He wanted the bulls to be as framey as possible but carry less condition than conventional tested bulls. Bulls that were sound on their feet and legs and that could cover a lot of pasture area with ease. And, finally, bulls that had excellent semen

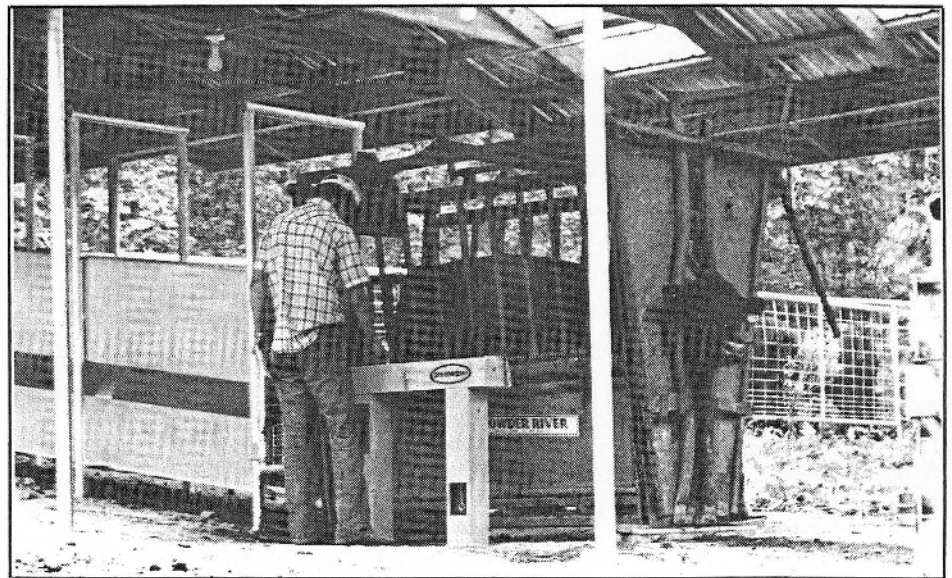
quality upon completion of the development period. The ultimate goal from all this is to achieve maximum growth instead of maximum weight—bulls that are ready to go to work.

General JJ Patton, Sayre Patriot and Garney Best Seller all have had an influence on the Garney herd. But the two bulls responsible for the foundation are Biffles Emulous 795 and his son Garney Emulous 3093. "Biffles Emulous 795 was a really important foundation bull in our herd. We used him on cows that were heterogenous from the top end to the bottom end, then went another step by breeding 795 sons back to his daughters. These half-brother, half-sister matings worked real well for us," states Garney. A true example of the Garney cow herd is daughter of 3093 out of a 795-bred cow. "Their femininity, length and angularity make the Patriot and 3093 cattle very similar," Garney adds.

Garney Elba 8149, a 3093 daughter, was intermediate champion at the 1980 Western National Angus Futurity in Reno



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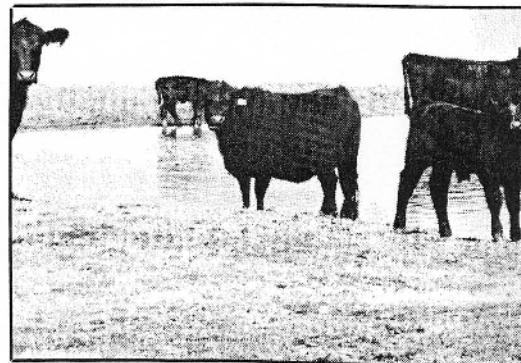
and reserve senior calf champion at the 1980 Houston Livestock Show—actual proof that performance cattle can still be popular in the show ring.

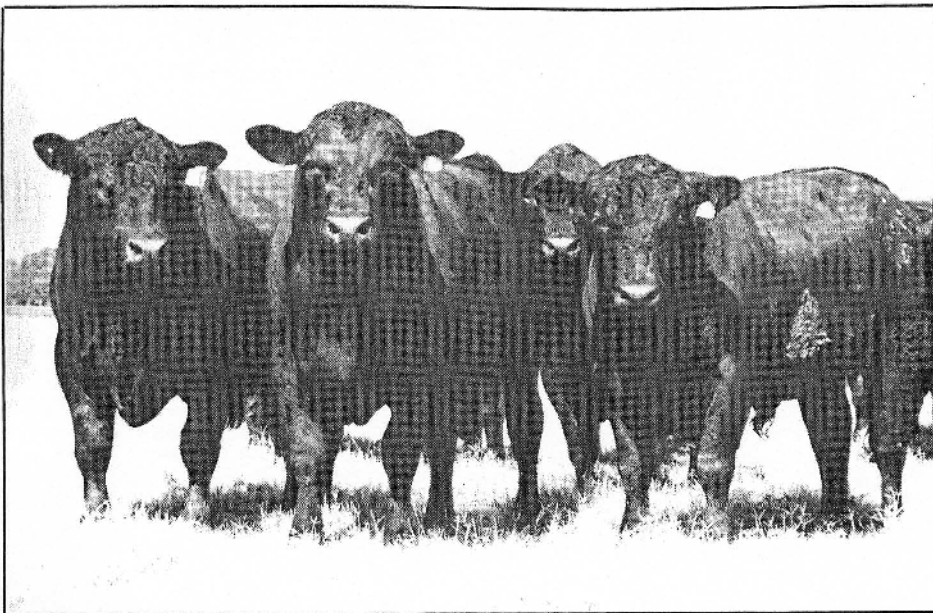
#### Production Sales

Last December, Garney sold Best Seller in their Genetic Bonanza sale. The firm apparently had some foresight when they named him, because he became just that. He commanded the top price of \$11,000 when one-half interest and full possession sold to Bob Laflin of Olsburg, Kan. Several sons and daughters of this 2-year-old bull by Garney Emulous Extender also made the list of high sellers.

For three years, Garney had two sales a year. But because of the tremendous work load preparing for a sale entails, they have had only one sale a year since 1977, usually in the fall, and sell a lot of their fall-calving cows in the spring by private treaty. So far

These baby calves and their mammas seek refuge from the Oklahoma heat in one of the 20 ponds on the Garney ranch. Since the Sayre cattle are going through an environmental adjustment, it's lucky for them that nearly every pasture has a pond.





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as sales go, the future is undecided at this point. Richardson says they do hope to have a sale this fall. But not just an ordinary sale. This one will be a very special sale, offering the cream of the crop from both the Sayre and Garney herds.

Garney feels that advertising plays an important role in their merchandising program. "The cattle are worth a lot more to our customers if we do a good job promoting the quality and integrity of our herd. If someone buys a bull from us, chances are people have heard of him and, in turn, have respect for where he came from. Having a good or even great cow herd is fine. But if no one knows about it, then you have a problem."

#### **Management**

Frank Bramwell managed Garney Cattle Co. from 1972 until 1980, when he left to take a position with First National Trust Corp., an investment banking firm in Tulsa. He and his wife Maria were instrumental in development of the Garney ranch. "Those two really developed this place. They built the facilities and improved the land. They did a great job," compliments Garney. He admits that he was shook when Bramwell said he was going into another business. "I didn't know how I was ever going to replace him." But when the Sayre acquisition occurred and Richardson accepted the position as managing-partner, Garney's hopes were restored that the ranch would continue to grow and improve.

Assisting Richardson is Bruce Pfeiff. He came to Garney the first of April from Summitcrest in Iowa where he was manager. Don Wilson, formerly with Sayre, thought the move to Oklahoma worthy enough to join the Garney staff. He is working with Crandall McLean, who has been at Garney Cattle Co. for more than a year.

Charles Garney became involved in the

Angus business in 1967 when he purchased 100 acres about 3 miles from downtown Kansas City. At that time, he didn't have any plans to develop the land, so he bought some Angus cows to put on his newly acquired property. "They were nice cows," says Garney, "so I called my friend Jerry Johnson, who had sold me the first cows, and ordered eight more." Garney then discovered in 1972 that his cows were the "old-fashioned kind." It was at this time that Garney began searching for a ranch where he could build a quality herd of Angus cattle.

There were several criteria Garney wanted to meet when searching for a place. One, he wanted good grassland. He wanted it to be near a lake so his family would be interested. He wanted to buy land that would appreciate in value. And he wanted an airport close by.

#### **The Search**

"I wrote several real estate people about my criteria. One guy wrote me back and said, if I had people that required that much of me in buying real estate, I'd be broke!" So Garney, who is a licensed pilot and owns his own plane, set out to do some looking for himself. "I got about 500 ft. above the ground and searched all over Missouri and northern Arkansas. I flew over the lakes and looked for good land and airports," he muses. Then Garney heard about Grand Lake in northeastern Oklahoma, where Garney Cattle Co. is located today.

Garney is from Kansas City and has lived there all his life. The Angus business, though important to Garney, is not his only concern. He owns a construction business in North Kansas City that lays pressure pipelines (water lines), does sewer work, builds bridges and concrete structures throughout 18-20 states in the midwest. Garney is a graduate of the University of Kansas. He started out majoring in chemical engineering but later changed to business. After college, he joined the Navy and was a deck officer for three years on the U.S.S. Haley. He returned to Kansas City after getting out of the Navy and started his construction business in 1962.

Garney is a keen competitor in all phases of his life—from the tennis court to his construction business in Kansas City to his ranch in Oklahoma. He is sincere, possesses a positive business-like manner and is a straight shooter—he tells it like it is. Garney is also a family man. He and his wife Patty have six daughters ranging from age nine to 26.

The future of Garney Cattle Co. always has seemed bright. But now, more than ever before, good things seem to be in store for the people who work there and are a major part of this operation. With acquisition of the Sayre cattle and Richardson as managing-partner, not to mention the others who make up the competent staff, it's a new beginning indeed for the Sayre cattle and the people of Garney Cattle Co. in Afton, Okla. 