

A Sale for all Seasons

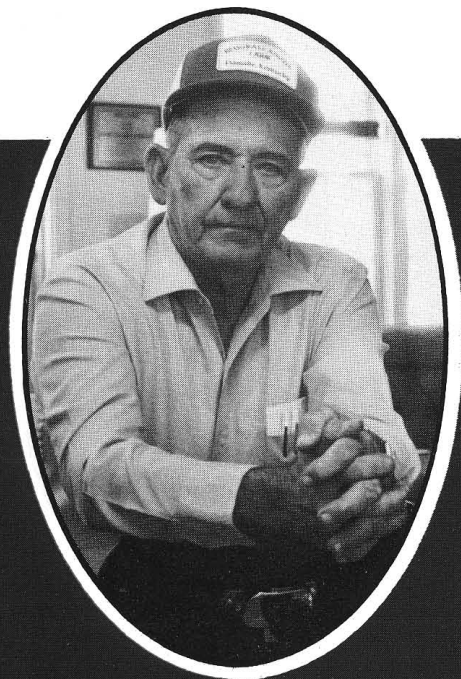
What would it take to get your state association rolling?

"Well, a better sale would help."

And, what would you need for a better sale?

"Some decent place to hold it, for one."

Sound familiar? If this exchange echoes some of what you've heard before, you may want to take a page from the folks in Kentucky who saw a need almost 25 years ago and did something about it. A forewarning: it didn't come overnight.



"CKAA was in the process of making a land purchase to build a sale barn at the time the old Reverie Knoll Pavilion became available at auction." —Floyd Dievert

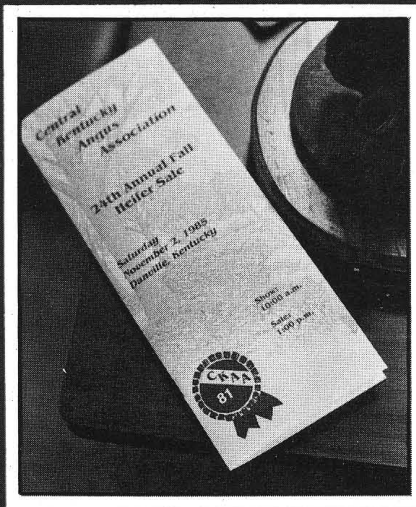
"this angus life"

One of the joys or challenges of this life is working with groups of like-minded enthusiasts. It all depends on your experience or perspective. Some of these associations are not all that workable or wonderful. It is a people business, and it's simple reality that not everyone in it is "like-minded" all the time. The Central Kentucky Angus Assn. may be an exception. Or a pattern. . . .

The Central Kentucky Angus Association has been staging sales through the year, every year since the early 1960s when it was reorganized. Spearheading this laudable effort (see box accompanying this article), is an energetic sub-group known as Central Kentucky Sales Inc. Its stockholders are all members of the CKAA; however, not all association members are stockholders. Nor is the CKAA a parent body in the strictest sense; the sales board is a kind of for-profit subsidiary that owns the physical facilities and in turn leases them to the CKAA for their sales. Incidentally, there hasn't been

much excitement over the "profits" as proceeds and returns have been plowed back into the organization and the facilities. All in all, a nice arrangement and one that's meant better sales, better averages, and a good reputation across the state and throughout that area of the United States.

A couple decades or so ago a need was perceived in the central part of the state. Folks weren't all that thrilled with selling through the stockyard though the facility may have been perfectly adequate. It simply wasn't a breeder's sale. Compounding the unattractive marketing climate was a state fractured into—at one time—more

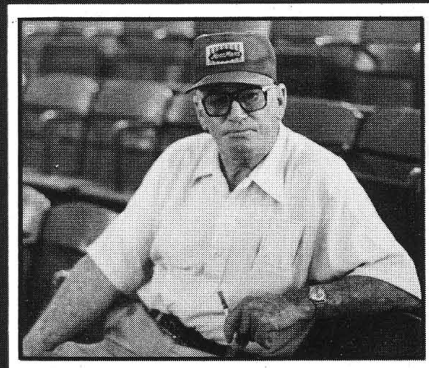


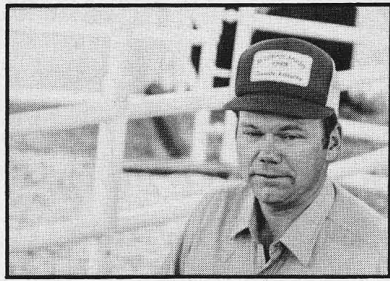
The CKAA stages different sales throughout the year to meet different marketing needs . . . A January "Winter" sale is geared to strictly seed stock and show caliber consignments.

A November heifer sale provides a market for a sizeable number with most going to registered herds and a few commercial offerings.

A spring and fall sale is held in April and September. Tested bulls are part of the spring event. Both sales generally present a wide range of lots and quality. The 1985 spring sale was the 83rd such event sponsored by the CKAA.

"The biggest task of an organization like this is keeping harmony among your members. You've got the assenters and dissenters. When we started out there were 16 Angus associations in the state of Kentucky. There are now approximately six. I attribute much of our progress to the efforts of Floyd Dievert. The CKAA now numbers over 150 members." —Don Pendergrass





*"Advice to any seed stock producer? Stress quality—do your culling at the stockyards."
—Tim Dievert*



The groundwork for today's successful CCAA sale is a product of a pattern set long ago with an emphasis on attitude and service.



Sue Hestor and Margie Dievert clerking at the 1985 Winter Sale.

than a dozen local Angus associations.

"We had such a heavy concentration of Angus cattle in small herds," CCAA Vice President Floyd Dievert points out. "What was needed was a permanent place other than the local stockyards to sell these registered cattle."

The problem is a familiar one, especially where breeding stock are a supplementary enterprise. Unless one has built up a thriving private treaty business or is located conveniently to a central test station or a cluster of fountainhead herds with coattails to ride on, marketing becomes a perplexing challenge.

Attacking the problem there in the Danville region became the obsession of a stalwart and determined group looking for solutions. The break came when the sale pavilion at Reverie Knolls Farm just outside town was offered at auction. This sizeable structure built of cement blocks featured a semi-round sale arena with a huge stall area behind. Built after WWII for an estimated \$46,000, the building was a godsend for the search party. It was convenient, spacious, and offered possibilities for expansion.

Over the years, it's become a rallying point for many of the state's association events and is a unique fixture in the Kentucky Angus image. Few associations of any state or breed affiliation can claim such an advantage. Most must schedule the fairgrounds, the local auction, maybe a university location, or set up a tent and

hope. Tim admits things fell in place (with, certainly, some aggressive nudging):

"We did get in when it was affordable, both for the land and the building. But there's been a lot of work and money raised to improve the layout and keep it up.

"Yet, when it's 19 degrees below zero outside (January 1984), the buying public knows it can come on a cold or rainy day and still be comfortable. That's quite an asset for the people selling. Weather won't keep the crowd away."

The sales committee does lease the facility too for other livestock events.

"We can provide a marketing place at a cheaper figure than one can rent a tent and bleachers," Tim says.

Often, those states with a decentralized membership or a peculiar geographical location will find members shipping cattle out-of-state, consigning to name sales in other states or regions. It's not unusual for breeders in some far-off corner to find it more beneficial and less hassle to cross the line and support a major event which provides no revenue or credibility to the home state.

Don Pendergrass, former president of the CCAA and an Angus breeder, marketer with the CCAA since its very early days, doesn't confirm exporting as a traditional problem with Kentucky, however. He contrasts the CCAA experience as being quite different.

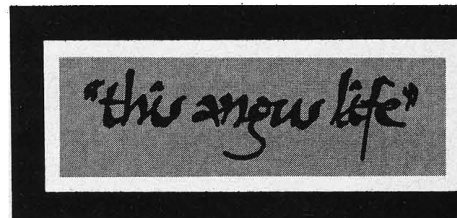
"We've had Angus breeders from Ohio, Tennessee, Indiana, Illinois bringing cattle here to sell. We've

held all-breed sales here, we've had Simmental, Shorthorn, and Hereford sales in this barn. "Here's a little history," he continues, "we had the dispersion of the J. C. Penney herd here, the Colossal Cattle Co. at Minatare, Ne., came here to sell in the early 1970s, and the renown Happy Valley Jersey herd was dispersed at this facility. So, there's been some traffic through here since the Reverie Knolls farm had it."

The payoff for the hours of donated labor and sacrifice have been better prices overall for the membership. Reputation for quality and reliability have played a part. The pavilion, the CCAA marketing effort, even the one-of-a-kind hamburgers at the lunch stand have had a buttressing effect.

Tim Dievert reports sale averages have fluctuated with national market trends through the years. "However," he adds, "CCAA sales seem to remain a little higher than from what we would consider comparable consignment sales.

"And, I'd have to say we've been hurt by the current trends, if anything. We've been selling the cow that's way better than the average cow but still moving in that \$1,500 to \$3,000 category. That's the price range today's



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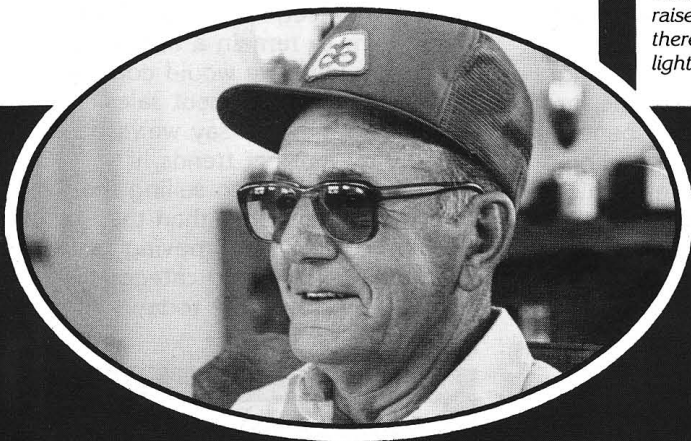
market is penalizing. There's no middle road. They're either worth \$5,000-\$10,000, or they're worth \$1,000." That too sounds familiar.

E.T. calves are appearing in the winter sale particularly, probably the leading sale. Club calves have been marketed also at some sales in recent years. Centrally tested bulls were offered this spring at the April association sale. So, there's variety for consignor and buyer alike.

But what's appreciated most is CKAA-Reverie Knoll Pavilion presenting an enviable partnership and a steady, dependable market, one that helps breeders make management decisions free from the nagging worry: "Yeah, these are great cattle all right, but how am I going to sell 'em?"

The "team" is a modest one, confident with what they're doing and optimistic concerning the future. Lest breeders in other areas, frustrated with the absence of a central marketing program, dismiss the success as pure luck, it may be best to conclude on a note of understatement. Tim Dievert:

"Through the years, it hasn't been too bad a sale, for a consignment sale."



"We have paid one dividend, more or less to pacify a few who expected it."—J.H. Royalty

Here's a little rundown...

Like any good organization where progress and pride in service are important, the Central Kentucky Angus Association has tallied a few highlights over the years of its existence. Some milestones to note plus the averages of the last two winter sales:

1986 Sale

4 embryos	... \$9,200	... \$2,300
33 females	... \$43,130	... \$1,307
4 bulls	... \$5,625	... \$1,406
41 lots	... \$57,955	... \$1,414

1985 Sale

4 embryos	... \$16,100	... \$4,025
39 females	... \$54,460	... \$1,396
9 bulls	... \$8,175	... \$908
52 lots	... \$78,735	... \$1,514

Top lot—1982—\$16,500 for a cow-calf pair

Top bull—1979—\$4,900

Top embryo—1982—\$13,000

Highest overall average—1981—\$3,063 on 56 lots

Highest female average—1981—\$3,410 from 41 lots

Highest bull average—1980—\$2,392 on 14 lots

Composite average for 1980 through 1984

55 bulls—\$109,495—to average \$1,991

217 females—\$526,465—to average \$2,426

272 lots—\$635,960—to average \$2,338

Composite average for 1980—1985

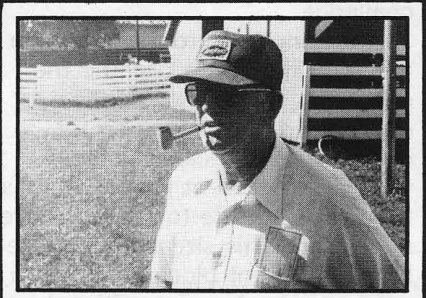
324 lots—\$714,695—to average \$2,206

Composite average for 21 years

1,329 lots—\$1,694,740—to average \$1,275

"It is a good building. We started out from scratch—\$7-800—and we've now spent approximately \$100,000 in the building and the land (14 acres). We built a holding barn and restaurant facilities. Then we installed theater type seats with backs, replaced the barn stalls, and raised them about eight inches. Plus there's been quite a bit of fencing, lighting, and heating additions."

—Don Pendergrass



No, first glance does not tell the whole story. The grave and epitaph are of Master Prince of Sunbeam, 1945-1952, the 1947 International Grand Champion Bull, owned by Reverie Knoll Farm, Danville. The bull was fitted and shown by Floyd Dievert, and that's the reason his name appears on this headstone.