

# KSU students conduct bull sale

**T**he cry of the auctioneer at Kansas State University's Special K Edition Bull Sale at Manhattan, Kan., signifies it's showtime for students enrolled in Miles McKee's sales management class.

■ As cameras, in the hands of proud relatives, flash from the full stands above the arena, students put the knowledge they obtained in the class into action to conduct the sale.

■ Animals groomed and clipped to perfection are led into the ring and set up by students. The "yo's" and "y-a-h's" heard as bids are spotted come from student ringmen. Students load out the animals and even clerk the sale.

■ "Seeing that first bull go into the ring was the most exciting part of the class for me," says Cara Nick, a junior in animal sciences and industry.

■ Earlier in the evening Cara recalled the saying, "Don't let them see you sweat," as she helped keep things on an even keel when the crowd of 500 people began to filter into Weber Arena to view the 39 bulls.

■ "Livestock marketing is a people business. You work with all kinds of people. You have to be able to relate to people," Cara says.

■ K-State was the first school to offer an experience of this kind 12 years ago. "Some schools have mock auctions; this is the real thing. It makes K-State the envy of students at other universities," says Jack Riley, head of K-State's department of animal sciences and industry.

■ "It's a unique educational opportunity enabling students to obtain practical first-hand experience vital to successful sales management. Though students may never put on a sale, the things they learn in this class—such as teamwork, how to meet deadlines, organizational skills, responsibility and how to work with people—will help them in their selected career endeavors," Riley says.

By Joan L. Istas  
Manhattan, Kansas



Student ringman **Todd Marple** searches the crowd for that bid.



"Any mistakes? Don't find 'em!" says the catalog committee. From left to right in the back row are **Kay Stadel, Tom Krauss, Jerry Creed, Paul Jones, and Oscar West.** **Cara Nick** and **Sandy Payne** are seated in front.

■ Planning for the spring sale begins as long as two to three years before students enroll in the class. Bloodlines are selected for the breeding program, animals bred, and later selected for the sale. All animals that will sell are fertility tested.

■ McKee also hires the auctioneer, schedules a limited amount of advertising, and selects the sale date before the one hour class begins meeting weekly. The date coincides with K-State's open house and the Little American Royal, a livestock showing and fitting contest that precedes the sale.

■ Students quickly get their feet wet by helping establish the budget, then working together on committees to put the sale catalog together, purchase advertising, and order food for the pre-sale feed. They arrange publicity, order decorations and sawdust for the arena, and plan how to turn the 3,500-seat Weber arena into a small area that will generate the excitement necessary for a successful sale.

**PLAN AHEAD!**



Students **Dave Hobson** and **Ken Rumford** discuss the sale ring layout with **Galen Fink**, herdsman of the Kansas State University beef unit.



**Tim Turek, Jim Gigstad, Jamie Spencer, and Dawn Jones** fine tooth the details as sale day dawns.



**IN CHARGE OF "AMBIANCE"**

The extra touches make the sale an event. Students **Mark Brown, Dawn Jones, Dana Johnson, and Ken Rumford** put the entryway in place.



Mums the word around the ring according to **Ken Rumford and David Meyers**.

■ Not all stories are ones of success. For instance, one student ordered enough bouillon for the pre-sale tea to last five years with enough still leftover to throw away.

■ Putting the sale catalog together can be difficult, too, students say. Students designed the cover and asked animal science faculty to provide needed information on EPDs, pelvic measurements, frame score, and scrotal circumference. They proofread the copy and, in order to stay within the budget, xeroxed all pages and stapled them into the catalog.

■ Publicizing the event was fun for Sandy Payne, junior in animal sciences and industry. Sandy, who helped coordinate bull sale publicity with Little American Royal advertising, was one of two students interviewed about the sale and Royal on television and radio.

■ "It's something I've wanted to try. The experience will help me if I want a job in communications," Sandy says. She is enrolled in a communications option.

■ Much of the washing, grooming, clipping, and teaching the bulls to lead are done by students who show animals in the Little American Royal.

■ Though some tasks were fun and



**Mark Pollock and Mika Parsons** register **Elmore and Doris Stout** and their grandson, **Justin**. The Stouts ranch near Cottonwood Falls. Seventy-eight buyers were registered.

**WELCOME!**



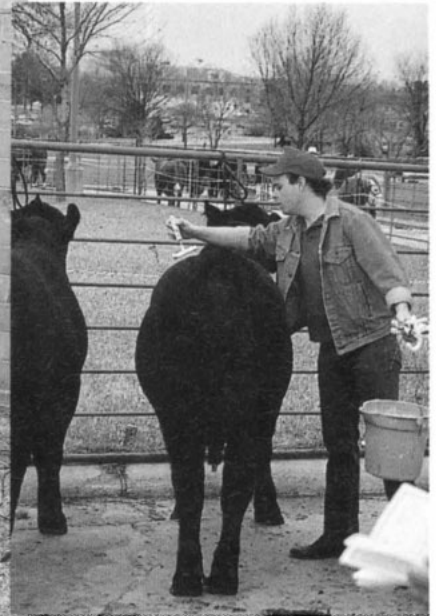
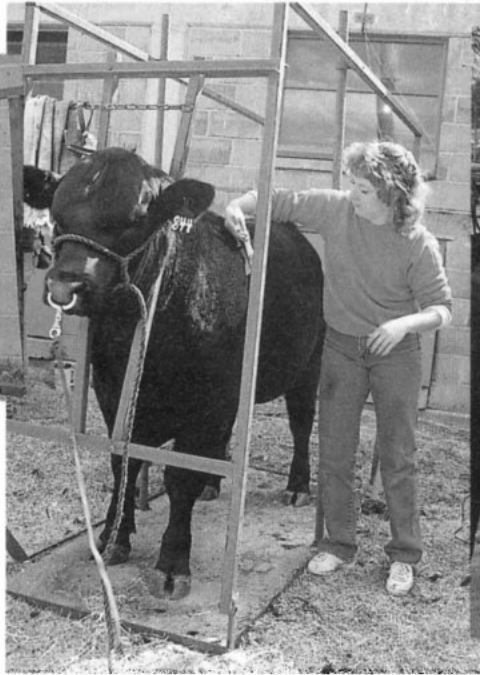
The crowd and anticipation begins to build in Weber Arena.

## BACK IN THE BARN



Finishing touches . . . **John Wagner**, senior in animal sciences and industry, clip the bull he earlier led out in the Little America Royal. The show preceded the sale, allowing visitors to view the offering from all angles.

**Denise Laird**, senior in ag journalism, prepares for the show. Denise reported she spent three hours clipping just one side of the animal.



**Dwight Conley** paint brands a bull.



Freshman in animal science and industry, **Jaret Moyer**, hoses down his charge.



Sale offerings are tied out according to lot number—just to keep things orderly and moving smoothly.

challenging, others were mundane but necessary, like wiping off the bleacher seats with a towel before the sale started, hanging the muslin in front of the railing, raking sawdust in place for the animals, and cleaning up after the sale on a Sunday morning.

■ The 39 bulls in the 1989 sale sold for \$60,775 and averaged \$1,558.33. The 18 Angus bulls brought \$28,750 and averaged \$1,597.22. The top-selling animal in the sale was the Angus bull, Hoss K 4968, which was purchased by Rexroat Angus Farm, Downs, Kan., for \$4,000. All bulls are sold as one year olds and are guaranteed breeders.

■ What makes a successful sale? "Good livestock, a good reputation and good advertisement. You have to be honest. You have to get people there," Sandy says.

■ "It's important to represent cattle in a straightforward fashion," adds Terry Ohlde, a junior in animal sciences and industry.

■ Students say they enjoy the class and learn from it.

■ "I enjoyed working with fellow students," Terry says.

■ "I think it was fun. I would recommend it. If I could take it more than one year, I would," said Sandy Payne.

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The culmination. See story for sale results.