

Angus in Tundra Country

Alaska's rugged terrain is home to rugged individuals, including a few successful Angus breeders. These breeders have found Angus cattle to be adaptable and productive in Tundra country.

Tanana Valley, the Matanuska Valley and the Kenai Peninsula are three productive Alaskan agricultural areas.

In the Tanana Valley, cattle, hog and crop farms are major producers of agricultural products used in the Arctic north region of the state. This area houses the community of Delta Junction and the state's second largest city, Fairbanks.

In the Matanuska Valley, livestock ranches, which raise beef and dairy cattle, hogs and sheep, and vegetable farmers are numerous. They provide agricultural products for this region. It includes the towns of Palmer, Wasilla, Willow and Talkeetna.

The Kenai Peninsula is home to the communities of Soldotna, Homer and Kodiak Island. Numerous farms and ranches in this area supply the agricultural products for the Peninsula. It is also the home of the wild buffalo and cattle herds on Kodiak and other islands in the Aleutian chain.

Russell and Linda Bowdre of Delta Junction own and operate a feedlot where they feed out beef cattle of mostly Angus breeding. They have been farming 350 acres owned and leased for nine years. They started their feedlot eight years ago, and feed out beef steers and heifers purchased from farmers to finish out for slaughter.

Along with his livestock farm, Russell works as supervisor of heavy equipment maintenance at Ft. Greely Army



Angus cattle are raised at the Alamasu Inc. Ranch near Delta Junction, Alaska.

Base in Delta Junction.

Byron "Barney" Hollembaek of Delta Junction owns and operates Alamasu Inc., one of the largest farms in the state that produces Angus cattle, wild game and seed crops. He has been raising cattle for about 15 years. His foundation cow herd is Canadian bred Angus.

Hollembaek uses artificial insemination (AI) and two cleanup bulls for one season before selling them for slaughter. Cleanup bulls consist of a Pine Drive Big Sky son and a Schearbrook Shoshone son. His current cow herd has approximately 400 head. He raises all his own crops, from grain to forage to seed. His cow herd pastures on bluegrass, fescue, brome, orchardgrass, reed canarygrass and Garrison creeping foxtail.

He raises barley, wheat and oats for the feedlot cattle. Hollembaek produces grass seed for his own purposes and also sells to feed suppliers.

Before coming to Delta Junction, Hollembaek farmed for 30 years near Palmer, in another part of Alaska, where he raised strictly seed and hay crops.

One of Hollembaek's other projects is his wild game operation. He raises buffalo and wild boars. His wild boars originated from stock purchased in Canada and his buffalo herd was first purchased from Kodiak Island, a large island off the coast of Homer in south central Alaska. He currently runs about 38 buffalo and 100 wild boars

on a range with special eight-foot high fences. This farmer was featured in detail in the January 1990 issue of the *Angus Journal*.

In the Kenai Peninsula, Bill and Marcia Ward of Soldotna own and operate Ward Farms, where they raise registered Angus cattle, Rocky Mountain Elk and hay.

They have been raising registered Angus for 13 years. They own 160 acres and lease another 100 for hay crop. They run a cow-calf operation and raise hay for their own stock and sell the remaining.

In demand in the Wards' area are 4-H project steers. They sell their weaning-age steers to 4-H members, keep some heifers for replacement stock and sell the rest.

The Wards' cow herd has foundation stock from Canada. Recently several more purchases have been made from Canada. They have done extensive AI with bulls such as Rito 2100 and QAS Traveler. A few of their past herd sires include East Champion Lightfoot, Gumbo Gulch Strikebacker 1S, Wilps HAR Atlas 32W and a Pine Drive Big Sky son.

The newest operation for the Wards is their wild game ranch of Rocky Mountain Elk. They breed elk and sell their antlers and some of the animals for meat. They also run a landscape company.

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STORY BY JENNIFER McCAIN