

# SEED AND SEED STOCK

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The second-generation Stewarts currently head up Stewart Seeds, Inc., as well as the registered Angus division known as Stewart Bros. At left are John and Alberta Stewart, at right Virginia and Gilman Stewart, the latter immediate past president of the American Angus Assn.

**T**he Stewart brothers, Gilman and John, believe there are great opportunities in agriculture. Their father believed it. Their sons believe it.

And they're folks who know a good deal about that subject, for three generations of Stewarts have devoted their lives to what started as a small family farm and is today internationally-recognized for its seed production and registered Angus cattle.

Headquartered a few miles northeast of Greensburg in the gently rolling hills of southeastern Indiana, the Stewart family's seed operation was launched at the close of World War I by the late Arthur C. Stewart, who bought the 80-acre home place his parents had rented since 1891. By plowing down large amounts of fertilizer (he was the first in Indiana to do so) as the experiment station recommended, he turned what his neighbors described as "the poorest farm around" into a highly productive base for his most celebrated product. Seed corn.

## A 2-Bu. Gift

Determined to win at some of the corn shows popular in those days, Arthur

Stewart sought the advice of a local German barber whose hobby of growing and showing seed corn had paid off with a win at Chicago's International Grain & Hay Show. The old man took an interest in young Stewart so in 1918 presented him with 2 bu. of seed, then that fall helped him walk the rows and select 10-ear samples to show. Just 5 years later, Arthur Stewart won his first major award at the International.

When hybrid corn was introduced in the mid-1930s, Arthur Stewart became one of the first in the country to produce it, growing 2 acres of hybrid corn in 1935 that yielded about 150 bu. to sell. But farmers were pretty traditionalist in those days and didn't take readily to hybrid corn at \$6 per bu., so he went to some of his neighbors and gave them ½ bu. each just to try it in place of their open-pollinated seed. Those who did agreed that the new hybrid (1) stood better, (2) yielded more and (3) was more uniform. So they came back the next year to buy a few bushels. And within a few years they were all planting it.

## Continued to Win

Following his first big win in Chicago 1923, Arthur Stewart continued to win honors at local, state and national corn shows, then in 1952 achieved the pinnacle of success in his field when he was named World Corn King and won the top award for his sample of 10 ears at the International Grain & Hay Show. In 1957 he repeated the feat at Canada's Royal Winter Fair, Toronto Ont., thus topping the world's two more prestigious corn shows.

Both of Arthur Stewart's sons grew up showing corn. Gilman at age 11 won the junior division in corn competition at Put due University (and got his first "away from home" haircut on the same trip). Then in 1953 he won the junior corn show in Chicago.

Both Gilman and John Stewart graduated from Purdue University and served 3½ years in the service during World War II. After the war they joined their father in the A.C. Stewart & Sons partnership and continued to operate after Arthur Stewart's death as Stewart Bros., which was incor-

porated as Stewart Seeds, Inc., in 1975 when the third generation entered the business.

#### A Family Affair

Gilman and wife Virginia have two children, son Tom and daughter Jane. John and Alberta have five children, sons Jim and Paul, daughters Barbara, Carol and Janet. All but Barbara, Carol and Jane are involved in the family business. Tom is in charge of the seed house. Paul is the office manager. And son-in-law Steve Gunn (Janet's husband) is manager of outside operations. All three Purdue graduates, they'll be joined in the business next year by Jim, who'll start his senior year this fall at Purdue.

In addition to the family members, there are now seven Purdue graduates on the Stewart Seeds crew, which numbers about 35 permanent employees as well as seasonal help.

"We're real proud of our work force," says Gilman. "Several boys started working for us while they were in high school, then they came on full time after graduation. We try to bring employees in on management decisions as much as we can so they feel they have a piece of the action."

#### International Business

And there's plenty of action around the Stewart place.

The seed business includes some 1,500 acres of corn, 2,500 acres of soybeans, 1,000 acres of winter wheat plus small acreages of spring oats and barley—part of that produced on 1,700 acres of owned land and the remainder under contract with area farmers. The Stewarts furnish the seed and technical know-how for contract acreage, then buy the seed for a premium of about 50¢ per bu. above market price. The growers can sell their seed any time between harvest and the following June 30 but must deliver when the Stewarts need the seed to process.

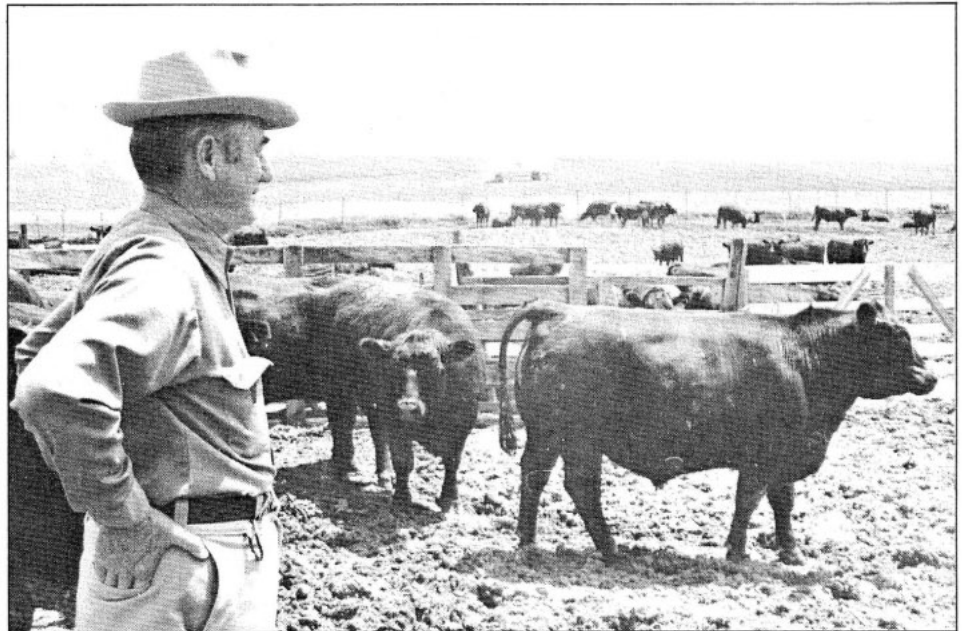
They do all of their own seed processing and at present have on-farm facilities for storing 125,000 bags of seed as well as 150,000 bu. in bulk storage. They market mainly in Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky and Illinois but this year have sold as far west as Nebraska, as far east as New York, as far south as Georgia and Alabama. And last

year Stewart brand seed went to Italy and Spain.

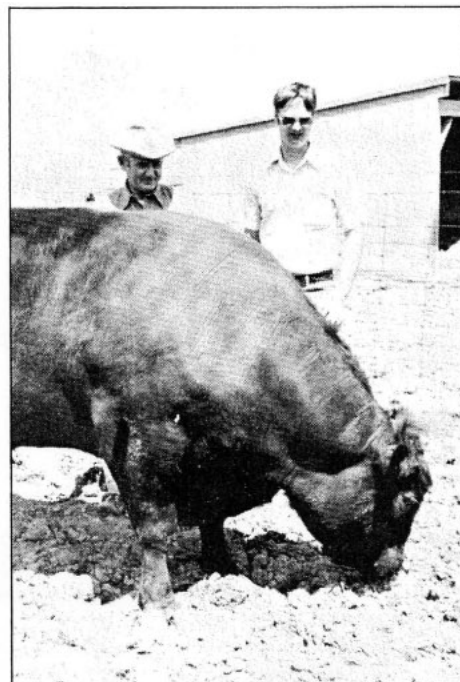
#### Honors and Organizations

In addition, the Stewarts give liberally of their time to community groups as well as state and national crop and livestock organizations. Gilman and John both have received honorary doctorate of agriculture degrees from Purdue University; their pictures hang in Purdue's Animal Science Dept. Hall of Fame; and both received the PRAIRIE FARMER "Master Farmer" award in 1974.

John Stewart, a life member of the Indiana Crop Improvement Assn. and reci-



*These steers are part of the 250 head fed out by the Stewarts during the past year. All blacks or baldies, most came from auction sales in Tennessee. They were laid in at \$69.06 cwt. weighing about 600 lb., says Gilman Stewart, and the first four loads were sold this spring at \$76 cwt.*



*Gilman Stewart (left) and herdsman David L. Smith look over herd bull Dakota 914 of SL, who had a 122 yearling ratio among 160 contemporaries and went on pasture last year weighing right at a ton.*

ipient of that group's Crops and Soils Merit Award in 1972, is particularly active in crops organizations. He is presently serving his 10th year as president of the Purdue Ag Alumni Seed Improvement Assn., is on the board of the Purdue Ag Alumni Assn., serves on the national board of the American Soybean Assn., served on USDA's Awards Committee in 1974 and is chairman of the board of the Decatur County Bank, Greensburg.

Gilman's interests have led to more livestock-related activities, highlighted by 6 years on the board of the American Angus Assn. and a term as president during the year just past. He's also served as president and director of the Indiana State Fair Board, Indiana Livestock Breeders Assn. and Indiana Cattlemen's Assn., has been a director of the Indiana Angus Assn.

#### Hogs and Steers

Gilman's love for livestock also was a legacy from his father, who raised and showed Poland China hogs in the 1920s—and made sure his sons had 4-H steers to show when they were growing up.

"We only had 80 acres of land at that time," Gilman recalls, "so couldn't keep

much livestock. But my brother and I bought another farm in 1953, then bought a herd of 34 registered Angus cows from the late Hal Royce, a veteran Angus breeder here in Indiana. These were good, big, strong cows, the kind that would be acceptable today.

"We've maintained the bloodlines of those original cows through the years. They were mostly Blackbird, Eventress (Erica) and Queen Mother cows with Revolution breeding on the top side. We've added a few females since then—but not many."

#### Influential Bulls

Two of the bulls whose influence can readily be seen in the Stewarts' 125-cow herd today were Incas Colossal 15 and Sir Big William 2021. The 15th won Indiana's 1971 Sire of the Year award and stood 10th in the ANGUS JOURNAL's Sire of the Year contest that same year.

And among the upstanding framey daughters of the 2021 bull were the 1976 Indiana State Fair Gold Medal and state futurity champion (a good producer weighing about 1,300 lb. today), the '77 state junior preview show grand champion shown by Jim Stewart, and the 1976 North American Livestock Exposition reserve grand champion. This latter cow, Gilman points out, lacked just 5 lb. of actually weighing 1,000 lb. at 365 days of age and now weighs right at 1,400 lb.

The Stewarts are currently using SP Freestate 37 and Dakota 914 of SL, a bull who had a 122 yearling ratio among 160 contemporaries in John Gauger's Shady Lane Farms herd, Clear Lake, S.D. From his first crop of calves came a state futurity reserve grand heifer, another that was Gold Medal champion at the Indiana State Fair, yet another that topped the Southern Indiana Angus Assn. Sale.

#### A.I. Sires

"We've also used quite a bit of A.I. the last 6-8 years," says Gilman. "I commend the Angus association for the decision to open up A.I. It was a great help to small breeders in obtaining superior germ plasm. We're currently breeding A.I. to MSU Freestate 343, Mon Reposa Chaparral, Bon View Winton 1342, Ankonian Dynamo and Byergos Black Revolution 36."

He points out also that "We've upgraded our herd enough to use some of our own bulls now. We plan to buy semen each year from a few proven bulls but will use one or two of our own bulls to check them out and see if we're making progress."

The Stewart herd has been on state performance test for about 20 years, and they've sent bulls to test stations three or four times. "But now we rely mainly on AHIR records," says Gilman. "We're very firmly entrenched in the philosophy that there must be performance testing. We mustn't like something just because it's pretty."

#### The Show Ring

"It's been our philosophy to combine show ring and production concepts, but it's



*Like kids of all kinds, these youngsters cool off in a drainage ditch in one of the Stewart pastures. "I was originally a Shorthorn man," admits Gilman Stewart, "but changed to Angus because (1) they sold better, (2) they won more steer shows and (3) they didn't have horns."*

been very difficult to do, particularly because of the extremes that have predominated at some of the shows in recent years. We used to show cattle quite a bit," he adds, "and have been fortunate to win enough to be significant.

"But we didn't start going to shows or sales until we felt we had an acceptable product. That was in 1963. We show mainly at the Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky State Fairs but also support our state association sales and the state futurity. We like to show (1) to compare our production with our fellow breeders, (2) to advertise and (3) because we like to show," says Gilman, who served 9 years on the Indiana State Fair Board and was the youngest man ever to serve as president.

Gilman's interest in showing cattle started with 4-H steer projects, among them an Indiana State Fair grand champion (a feat his son duplicated a few years later). John and Gilman both were on the livestock judging team at Purdue; and Gilman, after graduating in 1939, went on the show circuit with Maxwalton Farms Shorthorns from Mansfield, Ohio. Jeff Scarth, the Maxwalton herdsman at that time, paid him \$4 a day and laundry.

In November of that year, Prof. Frank King contacted Gilman and asked him to become beef herdsman at Purdue University, an unheard-of request in the heyday of the professional Scots herdsmen. By fitting and showing the Purdue-bred Angus-Shorthorn steer Loyal Alumnus 4 to grand championship at the International, Gilman opened the door for graduate herdsmen who followed. Of this term at Purdue, which was cut to a year and a half by notice from his draft board, Gilman says, "I'm grateful I had the opportunity to show that our agricultural institutions could train capable people."

One of the few "non-Purdue" men now on the Stewarts' payroll is herdsman David L. Smith, an Ohio State University graduate. Formerly at Sayre Farms, Phelps, N.Y., David and his wife Karen have been with the Stewart Bros. herd for 5 years.

First Stewart herdsman in 1963 was Henry Bergfeld, today general manager at Summitcrest Farms, Summitville, Ohio. Then came Dale Gauck, Norman Filbrun and Glen Heisey, now of Harris, Mo. "We've had five real fine men taking care of our herd," Gilman says, "all excellent individuals and very good cattlemen." 