

THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

BY JERILYN JOHNSON

His experience with Angus cattle began almost 30 years ago. In 1969 Wilson became the manager of the Stark and Wetzel Angus herd, which was headquartered at the farm on which he and his family reside today near Cloverdale, Ind. Through two decades and three changes of ownership, Wilson managed this farm and consistently improved the breeding herd.

Stark and Wetzel merged with the Premier Corporation in 1974 and Wilson became vice president of that business. The subsequent sale of the Premier Angus division of Premier Corporation to Granada Land & Cattle led to his position as manager of Granada's purebred cattle operations in Indiana.

While managing Granada's purebred cattle operations, Wilson was presented many opportunities for international travel to market seedstock to

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Give Bill Wilson a job and he will do it—with the drive and determination to succeed.

Being elected as a top officer of the American Angus Association was somewhat of a surprise for Wilson. This Indiana Angus breeder hadn't set his sights on the presidential office when he was first elected to the Board of Directors in 1990 and then for a second term in 1993.

"I was just glad to be of service and to give something back to the Association," Wilson says.

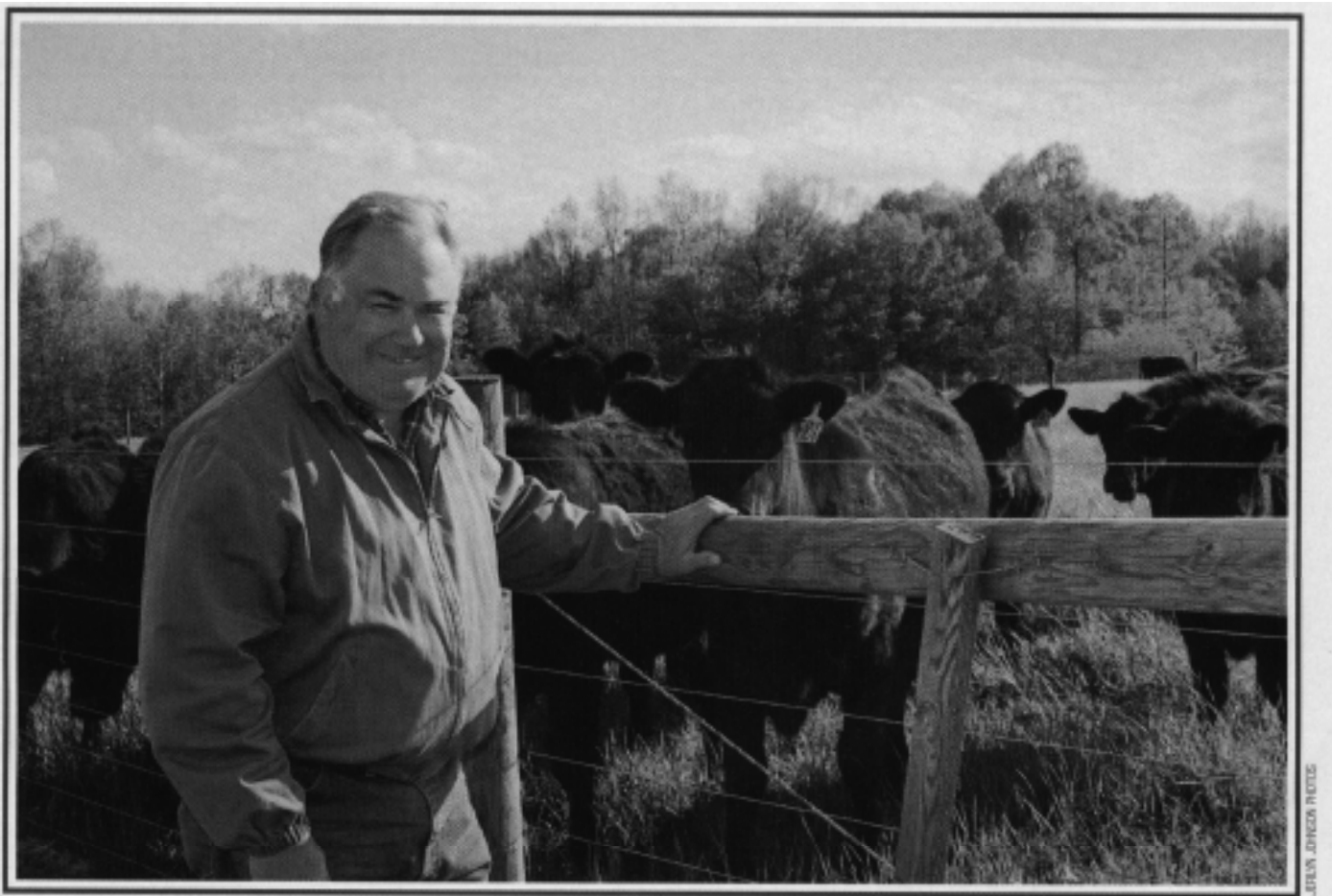
Still, when pressed into service, he met the challenge of serving as treasurer, vice president and now president of the nation's largest beef breed organization and is helping lead it into the 21st century.

Before his tenure is over, Wilson will represent Angus breeders at the National Angus

Conference in Ames, Iowa, in September, and then one month later at the World Angus Forum in Sydney, Australia.

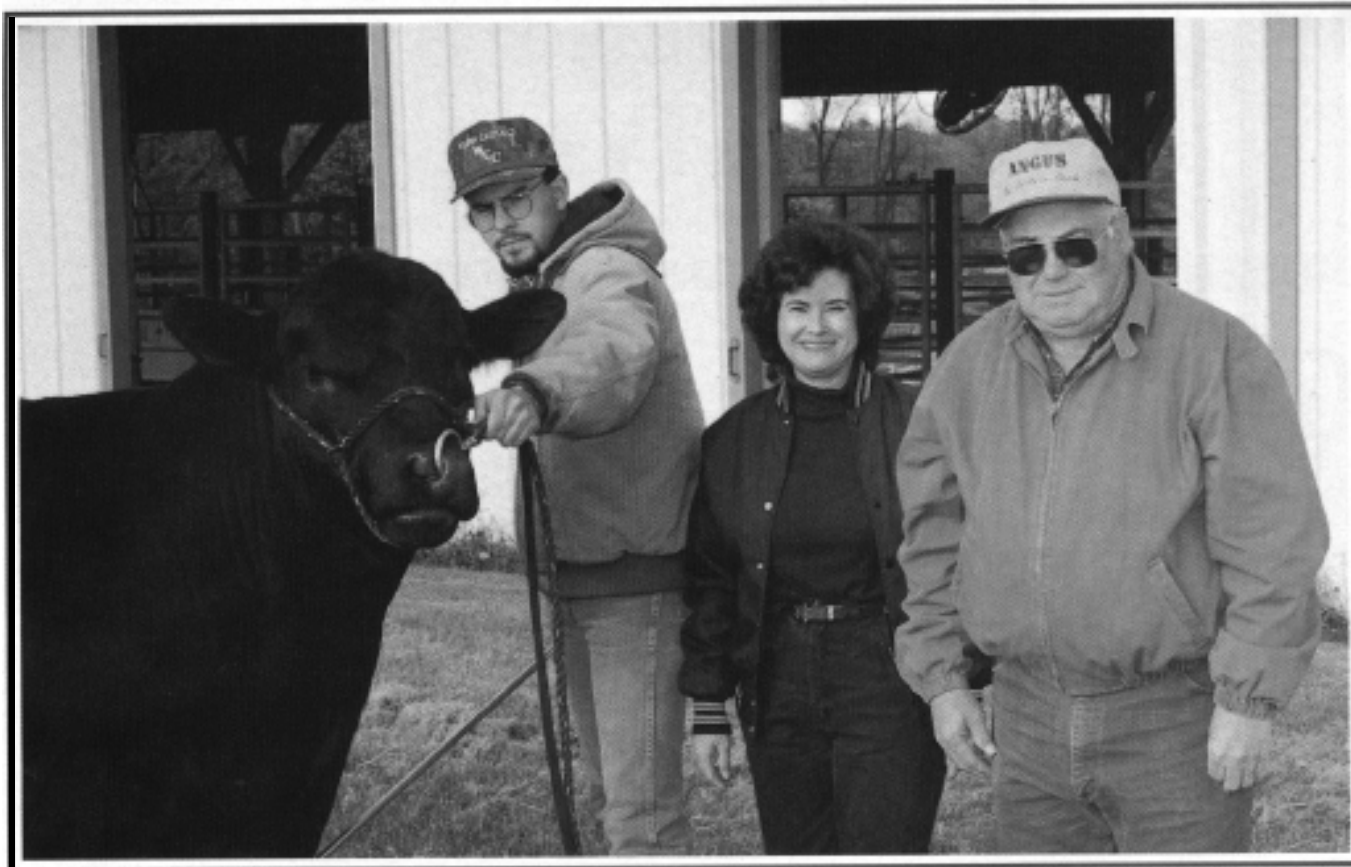
It's opportunities such as these that make this Illinois farm boy turned industry leader all the more appreciative of what the Angus breed has brought to his life.

Wilson has been involved with purebred cattle since his 4-H and FFA project days as a farm youth in central Illinois.



Bill Wilson, Cloverdale, Ind., is looking forward to representing Angus breeders at the National Angus Conference in Iowa and the World Angus Forum in Sydney, Australia, later this fall.

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The Wilsons (l to r): Chad, Priscilla and Bill share management, chores and quality family time at Wilson Cattle Company, Cloverdale, Ind.

breeders in South America, Australia, Mexico and Canada. He was also in-demand as a cattle show judge and has judged shows in South Africa and Canada.

Granada's integrated approach to agriculture and biotechnology gave Wilson a unique exposure and experience with the purebred industry, the nation's commercial cow herd, the feeding industry and the beef packing industry. Before Granada dispersed its Angus operation in 1991, Wilson was able to witness emerging biotechnology and genetic engineering wonders such as embryo cloning and sexed semen.

"I believe Granada's CEO, David Ellen was 50 years ahead of his time," Wilson says. "He envisioned a time when producers would pick up a seedstock catalog to order the latest genetics, just like corn farmers do today."

Wilson proved his adaptability and durability when he bought the headquarters farm from Granada-Premier Angus in late 1991. He and his wife, Priscilla, began Wilson Cattle Company and spent time re-building a quality Angus herd. Today, with their son Chad joining the family operation, they are enjoying new demand and success in marketing Angus bulls for the commercial market around the country, as well as marketing heifers to purebred breeders and for 4-H and FFA projects around Indiana and the Corn Belt region.

Wilson is also a partner in the Profitmaker Bull Test Center at Ogallala, Neb., which markets more than 500 bulls a year throughout the United States and Mexico.

To help you gain a better perspective of your leader's ideas and goals, we asked Wilson to address the following questions:

Q *You have been breeding Angus cattle for 30 years. What keeps you going? How do you generate new ideas and respond to industry challenges?*

A -we are full-time, totally cattle people. Over the years I've tried to keep an open mind and listen to others' ideas and demands. I accept that the world and our beef industry are constantly changing. To survive, you have to be willing to adapt, and for sound reasons, not just for the sake of change. Over the past three decades I've witnessed a lot of changes. Artificial insemination, embryo transfer and expected progeny differences (EPDs) all met with some resistance at first, but are important tools used by breederstoday.

Q *What does it take to be a leader of the American Angus Association?*

A You need industry experience, but even more important, you have to listen to your fellow members, be open-minded and be willing to make decisions. When making a critical decision at a Board meeting, I've tried to look past my own operation and, instead, ask myself how this decision will affect the entire membership and industry. You must also keep the Association in strong financial condition and be willing to help new members.

Q *What have been your most valuable lessons as an Association leader?*

A t's given me a broader view of the total beef industry picture. I've learned a lot by hearing other directors' perspectives. We have a diversified group of people on the Board of Directors, which is a good representation of our Angus breed.

It's also made me realize that our industry needs more research in areas such as carcass trait selection versus reproduction traits.

Q *What are your farm's long-range goals? Has the Association's long-range planning sessions helped you in setting priorities?*

A The goal of Wilson Cattle Company is to produce cattle that we can sell for a profit. Long-term, we strive to breed cattle that will work for both commercial and purebred sectors. We want cattle with acceptable EPDs and balanced traits.

The Association's long-range planning sessions have made me more aware of where the beef and seedstock industry are heading and the importance of value-based marketing.

Q *Who has inspired or influenced you the most in your life?*

A My parents, Berl and Dorothy Wilson. They taught me the value of hard work while growing up on our livestock and grain farm in central Illinois. They lived and farmed with honesty and fairness. Through their example I learned to make decisions, be responsible and to even take a few chances in life.

Q *What is your best advice to a new or young breeder starting out in the Angus seedstock business?*

A Walk before you run. Identify your customers and potential marketing area before starting a seedstock operation. Sign up with the Association's Angus Herd Improvement Records program and keep accurate records.

We need to stimulate more of our junior Angus members to become adult members and be a part of the Angus business. The best way is to keep building our

National Junior Angus Association programs and expose junior members to a lot of different opportunities.

After attending college, Chad has decided to join Wilson Cattle Company. Priscilla and I have often reminded our son that there are easier ways to make a living but, at the same time, we have encouraged him to do what he enjoys most.

Q *How can breeders better market and add value to their cattle?*

A I have to admit I'm a typical agriculturist — more production-oriented than market-oriented. I've learned the importance, however, of listening to customers. We are presently working with Angus America alliance to help our commercial bull customers. In the future, I think more Angus breeders will be working with alliances to help market their cattle and service their customers.

The law of supply and demand still applies in this beef business. If we produce a quality beef product that consumers want, the demand will be there and our Angus cattle will sell themselves.

Q *How can Angus breeders become better resource managers?*

A You have to breed the kind of cattle which will work in your environment. I predict that if you're going to survive in this beef business, you'll have to become more efficient and learn how to fully utilize natural resources. There are a lot of corn stalks in my region that go to waste each year after harvest.

We're basically a forage and purebred cattle operation with minimum farming equipment — a rarity in this part of the Corn Belt region. Feed grain is readily available, so we have found it more economical to buy grain to supplement our cattle.

Q *How can the beef industry become more competitive with the poultry and pork industries?*

A The only way for the beef industry to compete is to offer a more uniform and consistent quality product. Give consumers quality beef such as *Certified Angus Beef*™ and Choice cuts, but also offer them lean beef and value-added products.

The Angus breed is helping the industry move to value-based marketing, but we still need to develop and offer more convenient and consumer-friendly products. To capture market share back will take more than cutting production costs. It will take extra effort in gaining consumer acceptance and their food dollars.




WILLIAM "BILL" WILSON PROFILE

Age: 55

Hometown: Cloverdale, Ind.

Occupation: Purebred cattle farm manager (1969 to 1991), owner-operator of Wilson Cattle Company (1991 to present), co-owner of Profitmaker Bull Test Center in Nebraska, cattle show judge



Education: B.S. degree animal science, University of Illinois, 1963

Family: wife, Priscilla; one son, Chad

Personal traits

Self-motivated	Competitive
Determined	Profit-motivated
Adaptable to change	
Honest and fair	

Leadership roles:

- President, American Angus Association, 1997
- Association Board of Directors, 1990-1996
- President of Indiana Angus Association, 1974
- Bill & Priscilla served as Indiana Junior Angus Association advisors for five years.

Honors

- FFA American Farmer Degree, 1960
- American Angus Breeders' Futurity Farm Manager of the Year, 1985
- Five North American International Livestock Exposition grand champion bull titles
- First exhibitor to show three National Western Stock Show grand champion bulls of three different breeds (Angus, Shorthorn & Charolais for Granada) in same year, 1988.