

CATTLE CULTURE

by Megan Silveira, assistant editor

Raising a Champion

Junior members raise calves. Angus parents raise champions.

When my 7-year-old self first approached my parents with the idea of purchasing an Angus heifer, Tony and Jolene Silveira were both a little skeptical. I can still hear them explaining the type of responsibility owning a show calf would be.

“This is more than just a pet. This will be like your child,” they explained. “If that heifer is going to be fed or bathed or taken care of, you’re the only one that’s going to provide that.”

I nodded along eagerly — I was ready for bovine parenthood. Over the years, my passion, and the size of my herd, rapidly grew. As time passed, both my dad and mom fell just as in love with the cattle industry as I did, but they never let my dedication to the care of the animals waver. My parents always helped in the barn, but the responsibility of the day-to-day care fell on my shoulders.

What I did not realize at the time is that even as I was out in our barn, working to raise a champion heifer, my parents were simultaneously working to raise me into a champion individual. All across the country, Angus parents know what it means to raise a champion.

As the young woman I am today, I can look back on that original statement made by my parents and truly understand what they meant when they said I was going to be a parent to my show cattle. Any

success my animals achieved in the show ring was a result of my hard work at home.

And isn’t that the whole concept of parenthood?

Feeding your children to success?

Raising them to be champions? When our National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members take on the project of purchasing a

calf, they get a taste of parenthood.

The reason I think those NJAA members find success in this “bovine parenthood” is because of how we are raised. Behind nearly every successful young Angus breeder is an Angus parent.

In my own experience, I can confidently tell you I would have never become who I am today without the pair of Angus parents that were always standing behind me. My mom and dad are my best role models, biggest source of inspiration and loudest cheerleaders.


Over the course of my 21 years, they’ve found the perfect combination of encouragement, support and tough love to pass my way. They taught me the value of hard work, the importance of humility, the need for self-confidence, the significance of compassion, the beauty in putting

your heart into every task you take on. In line with the theme of this month’s *Angus Journal*, my parents fed me to success.

With this in mind, I have a new challenge for all of our readers. If you’re a junior member, take a moment to express your gratitude to whomever fills the

role of your “Angus parents.” Thank them for the support they give, the way they push you to be better. Thank them for everything. Thank them for helping to feed you to success.

To my other readers, the next time you attend an NJAA event, do not watch the juniors on the receiving end of the champ slap. Instead find their parents in the crowd huddled around the show ring. Watch the joy that overtakes them when their children find success. Gain a new perspective on what parenthood is all about.

Parenthood is not about the satisfaction of the win. It’s about taking pride in watching something you love grow into something better. It’s about feeding an individual with love and support and determination. It’s about knowing the word “champion” is not only awarded with a new banner. 

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— Megan Silveira