

by Linda Wells

Going Strong

bulls though. They not only enjoy local demand, but one of their best customers is from eastern Wyoming. Just last spring, he purchased 30 yearlings from Woodlawn and returned later to buy 45 more. He's done business with the Pierces for the past three years. "We feel that he must like our bulls or he wouldn't keep coming back," Lew quips. A sure sign of a satisfied customer.

The Pierces run about 160 mature cows and are in the process of calving 60 2-year-old heifers. They currently have around 175 calves on the ground. In their 100th anniversary sale coming up this November, the Pierces will offer 50-60 lots, mostly bred cows and those with calves at side. Most of the calves in this sale (about 90%) are by Briarhill Jay. The Pierces feel they've had excellent results with Jay. About 80% of their cow herd was bred to him this year. "We've never used a bull that has shown such a remarkable change in our calf crop," states Norris. Blanford and Lew agree. "And what's more, we've absolutely had zero problems with his calves," they add. Their heavy calf crop percentage is proof of that. This year it reached 102% when two sets of twins were born. The Pierces don't have a production sale every year—mainly because they don't have to. They sell enough cattle by private treaty that an annual sale is not necessary.

Breeding Popular Bulls

Woodlawn has traditionally been known for breeding popular bulls. One bull bred by B.R. was claimed to have had more influence on the Angus breed than any other single animal. He was Black Woodlawn 42008, the 1902 Chicago International Grand champion. Sanders' HISTORY OF THE ANGUS BREED claims that the bloodlines of Black Woodlawn were intensified in more herds than any other one bull in the history of the breed. Black Woodlawn sired Oakville Quiet Lad and Black Eileen, the sire and dam of Eileenmere 4, bred by Otto Battles, Maquoketa, Iowa, founder of the famous and highly successful J. Garrett Tolan's Eileenmere line of breeding.

The Pierces really made a name for themselves when they exhibited 14 consecutive champion pens of bulls (1949-1963) at the National Western Stock Show



Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Pierce

in Denver. "Those were the bulls that really made us a good commercial business," Norris comments. During this time, an auction was held in conjunction with the Denver pen show, which Lew felt was an excellent marketing tool for them. But when the sale was discontinued, the Pierces couldn't justify driving the distance to exhibit since there wasn't a sale. Not only that, but when Lew purchased Dor Macs Bardoliermere 40 in the early '60s, they were able to sell his bull calves at private treaty and in auction sales for more money than they were making in the pen show auction.

Dor Macs Bardoliermere 40 turned out to be a good investment for Woodlawn Farm. Lew paid \$4,000 for the bull and sold two one-third interests in him for \$10,000 apiece. That doesn't sound like a lot of money nowadays," comments Lew, "but in the 1960s it paid off real well for us." In the '70s, Woodlawn extensively used Wye bulls in their breeding program—namely Bond of Wye, Bailiff of Wye, Plantation of Wye and Favour of Wye. Then three bulls from

Briarhill Angus at Union Springs, Ala., were added—Briarhill Columbo 5134, by Briarhill Columbo; Briarhill Adventure 2938, a son of Columbus Adventure 3107; and Briarhill Marshall 2963, a Marshall Pride 4 son.

Believes in Cow Families

"I may be old-fashioned," says Lew, "but I believe female families are important in promoting breeding consistency and uniformity within a person's herd." He believes it would help the breed if people took a renewed interest in maintaining good cow families. "This is what the breed needs to pep up the business," Lew states. In one pasture of yearling females, Lew points out that they're the most consistent and uniform females one would ever want to find. And uniformity is what Lew believes to be the key to successful breeding. But so far as selection traits go, he's not sold on the theory that the biggest are the best.

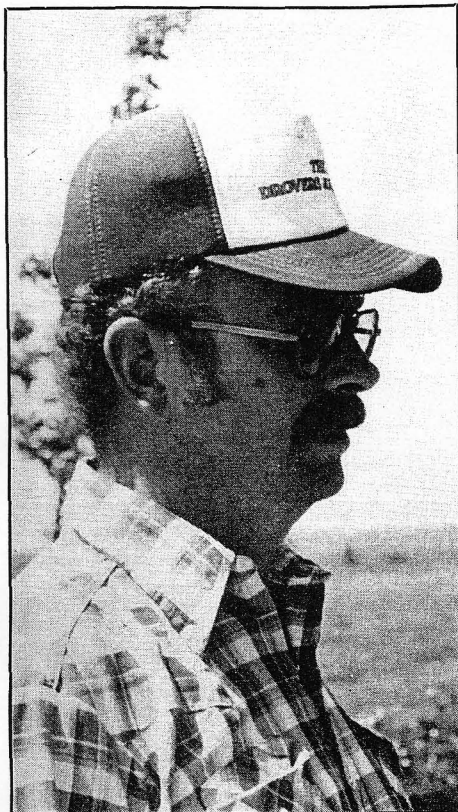
Heavy culling is a strict requirement in the Woodlawn herd. If a cow fails to rebreed or have a calf, they ship her. Approximately

10% of the herd is culled each year. They try to calve most of the cows out in the late spring. From a labor standpoint, they find it better to avoid calving from January until March because of harsh weather conditions.

Lew describes himself basically as a middle-of-the-road kind of fellow when it comes to breeding cattle. This isn't to say that he settles for second best but rather abides by what he believes in. When visiting Lew's office on the original Pierce homestead, one is surrounded by pictures and momentos from Woodlawn's past. He talks with great compassion for the Angus breed and the people who have had an influence on his life in the Angus business.

B.R. Pierce once said, "My belief is if you like the breed, you can succeed with it." A love for Angus and constantly striving to breed that "perfect animal" Lew's grandfather dreamed of has been reason enough for the Pierces to continue in this business for the past century. This same reasoning applies to future plans. And that simply is to keep striving to breed better cattle. Their farm lends itself to raising cattle and it's clearly a money-making business.

Plans for dispersing are definitely not in the making. This pioneer herd has survived rising and falling cattle markets, early-day diseases, fads and trends. It's a herd where uniformity, soundness, productivity and breeding consistency prevail. Woodlawn Farm has withstood the test of time. After 100 years, they're still going strong. ♻



Blanford Pierce



Norris Pierce