

# A Cook's Farewell

The Texas barbecue tradition ends in Denver.

by Corinne Blender

It started merely as a National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) Cook-Off skit. Entertainers at heart, Glen and Pat Grote hoped to interest people in the Auxiliary-sponsored All-American *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) Cook-Off by participating in the contest with eye-catching skits that pushed the envelope of creativity.

The Grotes began a tradition by feeding people barbecue from their Cook-Off area after their wild skits. Over the years, the line grew into an annual event. It became one of the longest feeding lines at the NJAS and a cooking competition of its own.

"Glen and his buddies would really get into it," Pat says of the original group who started the annual Texas Barbecue. "They'd get into fights — everyone had their way of cooking beans — but nobody messed with [Glen] and his barbecue. It has gotten a little eccentric in a lot of ways."

It's hard to know what to expect from the group of entertainers, Pat says.

"It's kind of a free-for-all. It gets wild. You have to let people do their own thing," she says, describing the event.

For Pat and Glen, the barbecue became an important way to help junior members who wanted to be involved.

"We did it, in part, for all of those little kids who could never win in the showing. If they didn't have the finances, we'd have them come with us and let them get recognized," Glen says.

Even for the Grotes, traveling to the NJAS became a challenge.

"We used to have more barbecue stuff in that trailer than heifers," Pat laughs. "We could



► Glen and Pat Grote have been a part of their last Texas Barbecue, at least for now, Glen says. The Grotes were recognized as 2001 Honorary Angus Foundation inductees at the National Junior Angus Show in Denver. cb

only fit two heifers in, and we had to hitch a ride for the rest."

## Realizing an end

The Grotes' children retired from the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) several years ago, and Glen and Pat say it is time for them to retire, too. The 2001 NJAS marked the last of the Texas Barbecue for their family.

"You've got to make room for

new people to do things their own way," Glen says. "They wanted to do things differently with their new advisors, and there comes a time when you have to move aside and let others do it."

The Texas Barbecue has been more than just a meal. Pat and Glen tell stories of memorable moments they have experienced throughout the years, beginning



► The Texas Barbecue started with the Grote family's feeding a small line of Cook-Off watchers. As the lines grew each year, the barbecue turned into an annual event at the NJAS. lz

► Above: Visitors to the 2001 NJAS fill their plates at Glen and Pat Grote's final Texas Barbecue. lz

in the early 1990s. They say the friendships they made are what they will miss most, next to the sore feet and sweaty T-shirts.

"It was great. My husband got all choked up and had to tell everyone he had a frog in his throat when he made his speech," Pat says.

## Auction

To finalize the goodbye, the Grotes parted with their barbecue pits. They were sold in an auction just before the feed began. Proceeds from the sale were donated to the NJAA.

The people who bought the pits deserve recognition, Glen says. "They should be recognized for stepping up to the plate and supporting the juniors."

Terry Jagers, Sulphur Bluff, Texas; Phillip and Darla Warfield, Andersonville, Tenn.; Belle Point Ranch, Lavaca, Ark.; the Illinois Junior Angus Association; and the Kansas Junior Angus Association purchased the pits.

Glen is quick to recognize everyone who took part in making the Texas Barbecue an annual event.

"It wasn't just us. There have been a lot of good people all across the U.S. helping out and pitching in," Glen says.

The Grotes say they hope someone will continue the barbecue tradition. However, Glen was quick to add that they shouldn't be counted out just yet.

"You might see us again, when we have grandchildren showing," Glen says.

