



Learning to MEAT Demands

The McCabes gain real-life experience through the national junior Angus carcass contest.

by Heather Hopper



PHOTO BY HEATHER HOPPER

▶ The McCabe family of Kim-Mac Farms, Elk City, Kan., takes the National Junior Angus Show carcass contest seriously, having had at least one steer in the top 10 each year since 1996. Pictured are (front row, from left) Randy, Esther, Varee, (back row, from left) Hannah, Flinton and Ethan.

Logbook

November 2001: Pick out potential steers from bulls that did not make the sale. Castrate them and start halter-breaking. Start steers on silage and corn diet.

December 2001: Increase silage and corn intake. Continue to halter-break. Send registration papers to the American Angus Association.

March 2002: Gradually increase the corn content in the ration by 1 pound (lb.) per head per day.

May 2002: Sixty days before the show. Need to get the steers eating as much corn as possible. Decrease silage. Replace with prairie hay. Slick-shear the calves to keep them cooler and to clean up their appearance. Double-check tattoos and enter them in the show.

June 2002: Begin to tie steers up during the cool part of the day. Push more corn into the ration. Check tattoos again.

July 2002: Clip steers for show. Load water from the pond for steers to drink at the show. Head to the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Milwaukee, Wis.

All of this, just to get ready for the carcass steer contest at the NJAS. To the uninformed observer, taking a carcass steer to a show may not seem like that much work. Just throw out some feed in a bunk and increase it over time. However, the McCabe family of Kim-Mac Farms, Elk City, Kan., takes this contest a little more seriously. Their diligence has paid off, and they have had at least one steer in the top 10 each year since they began entering the contest in 1996.

Family history

Ray and Jenny McCabe started the farm that became Kim-Mac Farms in 1920. The original two-story farmhouse still serves as the McCabe home. Ray and his son Meredith operated the farm and hay business together for many years. In 1956, David Kimzey wed Meredith's oldest daughter, Gail, and formed the partnership that became known as Kim-Mac Farms.

Kimzey proposed raising Angus cattle, and the first registered cattle came to the farm in 1967. Kim-Mac soon began to breed cows by artificial insemination (AI) with the help of a local dairyman. Meredith's son, Randy McCabe, and David's son, Greg Kimzey, graduated from Kansas State University (K-State) in 1978 and 1982, respectively. They returned home with their wives, Varee and Sue, to take over the farming operations. By then, AI was being used heavily.

Spanning 82 years, four generations of McCabes have lived on the original homestead. Flinton, Ethan, Hannah and Esther are the fourth generation.

Getting involved

All of the children have been involved with Angus cattle most of their lives. It seemed only logical that they would become members of the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA).

"My dad took me to my first Angus show when I was seven," the oldest son, Flinton, recalls. "The Kansas Angus Futurity was my first show. It was really fun

because I was reserve champion junior showman at my very first junior Angus show."

He had been bitten by the show bug and convinced his dad to let him show heifers and steers. Flinton began to enter the carcass contest at the National Junior Angus Show in 1996 and has entered a steer in every contest since.

His younger brother Ethan started showing cattle five years ago and began competing in the carcass contest in 1999.

"My first carcass contest I got reserve champion," Ethan says, speaking of the 1999 national show held in Tulsa, Okla. Flinton received third place, behind his brother.

The McCabe family has done quite well in the carcass contest over the years, having had at least one steer in the top 10 each year.

In 2001, when the carcass contest added a state group division (three steers from the same state), the family captured reserve champion. The final index scores are tabulated to determine an overall group score.

"It gives them something that they compete with on a level playing field with other youth across the nation," Randy McCabe says.

Randy points out, however, that Kim-Mac Farms does not breed specifically for this contest.

"We try to provide the complete package," Randy explains. After the farm picks bulls for their production sale in March, the youth pick the potential prospects for the national show out of the bulls

Table 1: Top 10 placings in the 2002 NJAS carcass contest

Rank	Entry	Contestant	Wt. (lb.)	HCW (lb.)	DRESS (%)	FT (in.)	REA (sq. in.)	KPH (%)	QG	YG	CAB®	Index
1	20	John Pfeiffer	1,265	807	63.79	0.40	15.3	2.5	CH+	2.17	Y	108.08
2	10	Coye Crenshaw-Kleve	1,155	718	62.16	0.35	13.7	1.5	CH ⁰	2.02	Y	107.42
3	24	Flinton McCabe	1,095	718	65.57	0.40	14.1	2.0	CH ⁰	2.12	Y	105.42
4	42	Hannah McCabe	1,180	757	64.15	0.40	13.2	2.0	PR-	2.55	PRIME	103.58
5	49	Brandon New	1,310	814	62.14	0.40	13.8	2.0	PR ⁰	2.58	PRIME	103.16
6	41	Flinton McCabe	1,025	640	62.44	0.40	12.4	2.0	CH+	2.36	Y	102.48
7	50	Robert Tiedeman	1,245	746	59.92	0.30	14.0	2.0	CH-	2.00		102.24
8	48	Lana Phelps	1,280	777	60.70	0.30	14.3	2.0	CH-	2.03		101.88
9	36	Lucas Harpster	1,120	679	60.63	0.40	14.0	2.0	CH-	2.00		101.78
10	26	Blake Brockway	1,230	812	66.02	0.50	15.2	2.5	PR-	2.47	PRIME	101.28

that are left on the bottom end. The family knows excellent genetics will improve your chances at being competitive.

“We look at pedigrees and carcass information mainly,” Flinton says.

The contest

The carcass contest was started in 1985, to enhance awareness of the industry’s primary goal — producing top-quality beef. Although the contest was discontinued after 1991, it was reintroduced in 1993 with adjustments to the rules.

“We wanted to remind juniors, parents and other leaders of this very important aspect of our industry,” says Mark Wyble, former director of junior activities for the American Angus Association. The founders of this contest also wanted to focus attention on the advantages that Angus cattle have on carcass traits.

Focusing on genetics is important to the breed because it allows Angus producers and junior members an opportunity to see what genetics are working in the industry.

“Juniors have the opportunity to participate in an event where they gain real-world experiences,” says Clint Walenciak, Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) assistant director of packing and coordinator of the

carcass contest. “The contest is important to the industry in that it helps to build a foundation of understanding in the participants, who are the potential industry leaders of tomorrow.” The contest has been so successful that other contests have adopted similar rules.

For the McCabe family, this contest allows the industry to compare a bull’s expected progeny differences (EPDs) to how his progeny will perform on the rail, Flinton comments. “The carcass contest allows us to take cattle and see how they grade against other cattle. It teaches us more of a commercial aspect of

things instead of just all show.”

The McCabes agree the contest provides a chance to see how Kim-Mac Farms’ genetics compare to those of other

cattle throughout the United States.

“I believe juniors have a more balanced perspective of our industry,” Wyble says. Randy McCabe agrees, noting it is important for juniors to realize that they are in the food business and not just the cattle business.

Hannah McCabe admits that one of the reasons she participates is for the prize money, and for good reason. First place receives \$1,000; second, \$750; third, \$500; and on

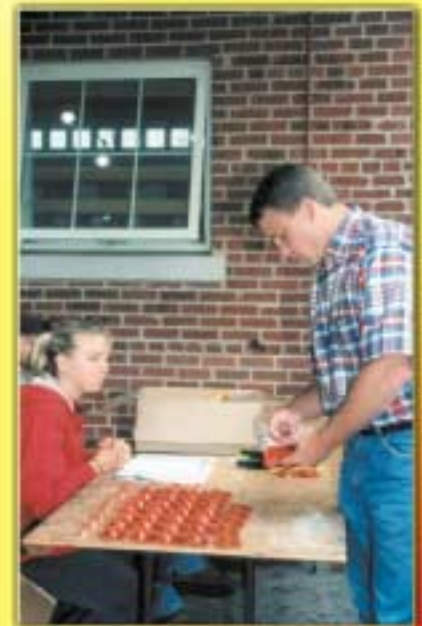


PHOTOS BY COURTNEY WINNER

► Assisted by regional manager David Gazda, Flinton McCabe (right) checks his steer in for the carcass steer competition at the 2002 NJAS.

down to 10th place, which receives \$100. All cattle qualifying for *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) after that receive a \$50 bonus, on top of the additional 25% premium from IBP for CAB acceptance.

The carcass contest has meant many things for the McCabe family. It has given them a chance to test their genetics, meet new people across the nation, and continue to represent the four generations of Kim-Mac Farms. This year, Flinton accepted the Grand Champion State Group banner on behalf of his family. The pen of three consisted of one Prime, Yield Grade (YG) 2 and two CAB YG 2 carcasses.



► Forty-one junior exhibitors presented 41 individual steers and eight state group entries in the 2002 National Junior Angus Carcass Contest.