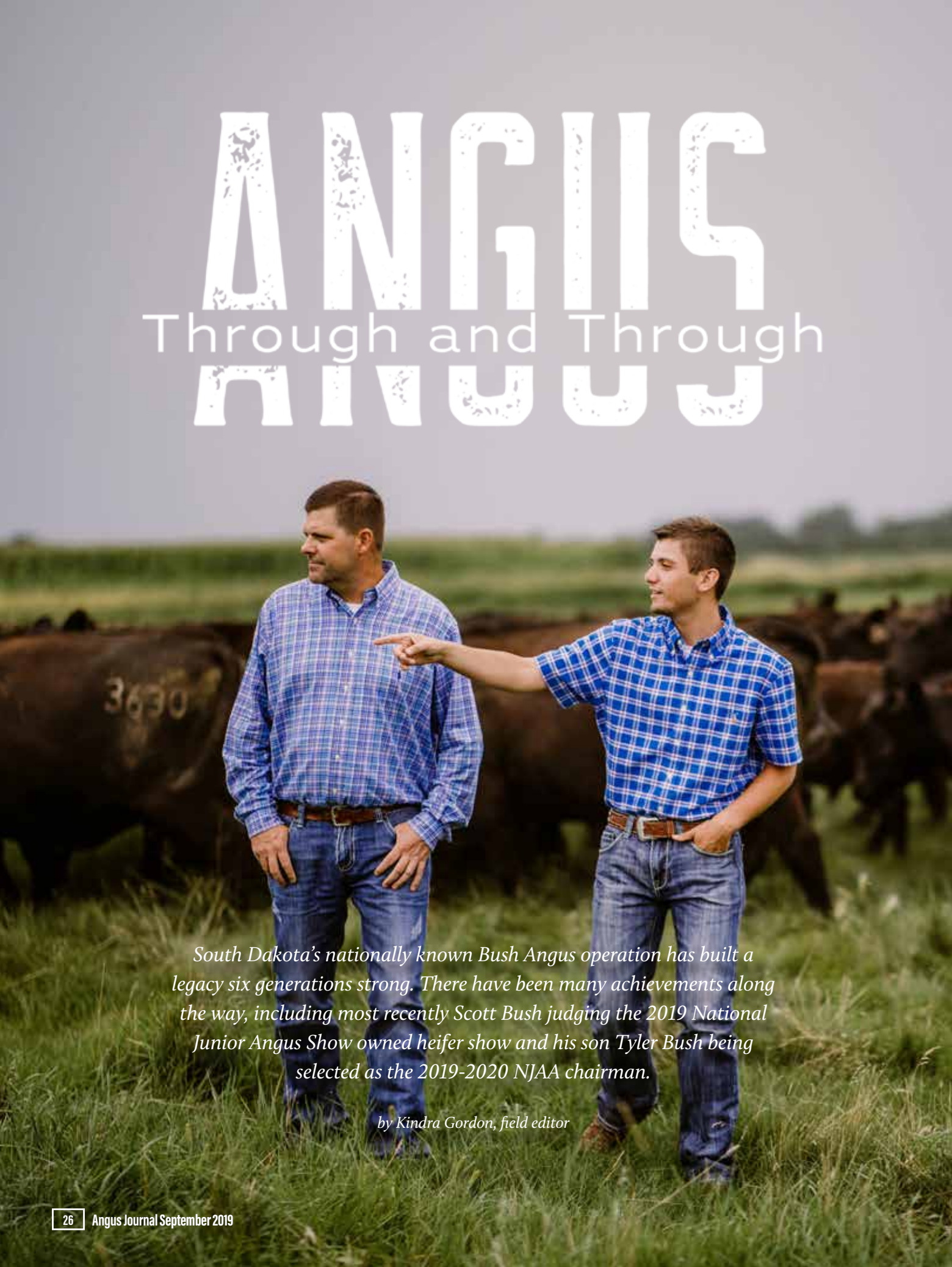


ANGUS

Through and Through

ANGUS



South Dakota's nationally known Bush Angus operation has built a legacy six generations strong. There have been many achievements along the way, including most recently Scott Bush judging the 2019 National Junior Angus Show owned heifer show and his son Tyler Bush being selected as the 2019-2020 NJAA chairman.

by Kindra Gordon, field editor



MAGGIE MAE IMAGES

A champion 4-H steer in the late 1920s set the course for what has grown over the decades to be the Bush Angus operation near Britton, S.D. As the story goes, W.E. Bush — the second generation on the farm — purchased the Angus steer from a neighbor about 30 miles away for his son Clifford to show in 4-H. When the steer was slapped as champion at the fair, W.E. went back and bought the steer’s mother and the calf at her side. To this day, every cow in the Bush herd can be traced back to that one Angus cow.

At the time, no one could predict the impact that foray into the Angus breed would have on the Bush family, but it led to Clifford’s son Jim establishing a successful Angus production sale which will mark 46 years in 2020, numerous show champions including 2014 Grand Champion Pen of Three bulls at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver, Bush Angus progeny being utilized in herds across the country, and Jim’s son Scott and grandson Tyler being involved as the fifth and sixth generations of Bush Angus. Most recently, Scott had the honor of judging the 2019 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) owned heifer show July 19-20, and Tyler stepped into the role of National Junior Angus Board (NJAB) chairman.

“It’s been a whirlwind,” Scott says of their recent summer highlights at the NJAS in Louisville, Ky., but the analogy aptly describes the family’s Angus evolution through the generations as well.

Family focused

In 1883, Joseph Bush homesteaded what is today Bush Angus on land in the northeastern corner of South Dakota. Presently, the multi-generation Angus operation includes Jim and Carol Bush, Scott and his wife, Jo, and their two children, Tyler and Brittany. Tyler will be a junior at South Dakota State University (SDSU) this fall; Brittany stays connected to the farm but lives and works in Sioux Falls. In addition to Angus cattle, the family grows corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa. Jim still works alongside Scott and Tyler and oversees things when the younger duo is on the road judging or showing.

The Bush herd has always been closed and hovers at about 200 registered Angus females, with about 165 mature cows and the balance being replacement heifers. With no outside females added, the Bush family believes they have been able to develop a herd that is closely bred and responds uniformly in type.

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GET TO KNOW THE NJAB CHAIRMAN

Interacting with people, livestock judging and going to the movies fuel Tyler Bush.



As the sixth-generation cattleman bearing the Bush name, this 21-year-old was selected as the 2019-20 NJAB chairman at the 2019 NJAS in Louisville, Ky.

Reflecting on his years involved with the Angus breed, Tyler points to NJAA members Alex and Andrew Rogen from his home state of South Dakota for setting a positive example. Both brothers served on the junior board.

Tyler also credits attending his first Leaders Engaged in Angus

Development (LEAD) conference in Fort Collins, Colo., for sparking his interest in getting more involved in the NJAA. “I really got to know kids who had a common interest in Angus cattle, and because of that connection, they’ve become some of my best friends.”

Tyler says junior board members encouraged him to step out of his comfort zone. Today, as an NJAA green jacket himself, he offers that same advice to other juniors.

And, during his final year on the board, he says his focus is on being a resource whom other members feel comfortable coming to. “I want to be that person that they can go to and ask questions and learn from and make a difference ... I want to inspire others.”

The revamped Angus Mentoring Program (AMP) is another important project for the young Bush. He recognizes it’s important for connections, networks and conversations to help junior members get involved and build for the future.

Outside of the NJAA, Bush is looking forward to some other goals. As a recent graduate of Hutchinson Community College, Bush is now enrolled as an animal science-ag business major at South Dakota State University (SDSU). He is looking forward to continuing his collegiate livestock judging career. Bush is excited to be closer to home and continue working with his dad and grandpa. During any downtime, Tyler says he’s a movie buff and has 300-400 DVDs in his collection.

Looking toward his future, Tyler holds the quote “Be phenomenal or be forgotten” in regard. He writes this in his steno notebook before every judging contest. The quote is not about winning, to Bush it’s about work ethic and passion.

“It’s to remind me that phenomenal passion and work ethic won’t be forgotten — that speaks more than your placing or score.”

Scott notes that a favorite achievement for him has been Bush Angus progeny earning recognition at the NWSS over the years. He says, “To go there with a home herd of 165 cows and to be competitive is humbling. And, we do it as a family; it’s been Dad and I, or Jo and I, or the kids and us doing the fitting and showing.”

Showing at the NJAS has also been an important family activity for the Bushes. The 2019 NJAS marked Scott’s 33rd year at the event. He hasn’t attended consecutively, but there are only a handful that he’s missed. “When I was a kid, we went; or if we missed the national show, we’d always go to the regional show,” he tells.

That said, being at the event wasn’t about winning. “We are competitive people, but we didn’t go thinking we’d win, we just enjoyed the people,” he says.

That still rings true today, as Tyler notes that a highlight for him in being involved in the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) has been the people he’s been able to get to know — and be inspired by — along the way. Now, in his role as chairman of the NJAB, Tyler hopes to contribute to elevating other junior members’ experiences as well.

Tyler has initiated revamping the mentoring program hosted during the NJAS and says it was well received by junior participants at the 2019 event. Now dubbed AMP — the Angus Mentoring Program — it has a new slogan and logo. Tyler notes this program was important to him because of his own experience with the mentoring program in Des Moines, Iowa, in 2008. At the event, the young Bush was paired with Clinton Laflin of Kansas as his mentor. To this day, the two still stay in touch, and Tyler says, “He’s been a great resource and has supported me.”

Skills for the future

Experiences such as those, along with the array of NJAS events teaching life skills, have continued to impress the Bush family through the years. Scott points to the public speaking, Auxiliary-sponsored All-American *Certified Angus Beef*® Cook-Off and other contests and says, “Those are just as important as being in the show ring.”

And, among his own kids and other junior members he's seen NJAA activities foster responsibility and speaking skills at an early age.


"They've learned what they have to get done, and at 12 and 13 years old they can talk easily with adults. That's a huge thing missing with many of today's kids."

Likewise, Scott has seen growth from Tyler's real-world responsibilities of working with and leading others on the NJAB. Scott notes that Tyler has always been an energetic kid, but now he says, "He's gotten so dang organized."

The NJAA upbringing

As Tyler prepares to return to the family operation after college graduation, those skills will no doubt be important.

"We're excited about Tyler coming back in the next few years," Scott says. With farm labor a continual issue, they look forward to making changes to streamline their management, and they anticipate wading through the evolving genomic changes occurring within the breed.

Most importantly, Scott says he looks forward to the family working together — just like it was when he was growing up. "Having grandparents and kids and grandkids all working together, it's huge and neat to see." 

IN THE ARENA

Scott Bush shares perspective from his 2019 NJAS judging experience.

In spite of having attended more than 33 National Junior Angus Shows (NJAS), Angus breeder Scott Bush admits that when he was asked to judge the 2019 NJAS owned heifer show his first reaction was hesitation.

The reason: this was his son Tyler's last year to compete. Scott says, "I didn't want to miss his showmanship and showing, because if I was going to judge the heifer show, I couldn't be there for his events."

But after a family discussion with Tyler and Scott's wife, Jo, they assured him they could handle fitting and showing their cow-calf pair and encouraged Scott to judge. Thus, Scott had the privilege of officiating the heifer entries while his son Tyler was in the same ring wearing a green jacket as a member of the National Junior Angus Association Board of Directors (NJAB).

Of his experience, Scott says, "I'm glad I did it. It was fun. I've been to 33 National Junior Angus Shows, but at this one, I saw every heifer from class 1 to 63."

And his takeaway, "I was happy with the quality from top to bottom. There are cattle from different regions and environments and different genetics, and that's all right. If we all liked the same kind of cattle, there would only be about four head there."

For Bush, the experience also affirmed the need to continue having livestock shows where structure and phenotype are being evaluated. He acknowledges that shows are a niche within the beef industry. "Niches are important, especially as big as the Angus breed is," he says.

For the junior members at the halter during the event, Bush says his hope was to keep encouraging them. He says, "Once you take an animal and work hard and have passion and confidence, don't lose that."

Looking ahead, Bush says one day he would love to return to the NJAS show ring. His son Tyler, a budding livestock judge, has expressed the goal of following in his dad's footsteps to judge the event — and has suggested that Scott could return as his assistant.



An Angus 4-H steer purchased in the 1920s set the Bush Angus operation into motion. Pictured are Scott, Tyler and Jim Bush.