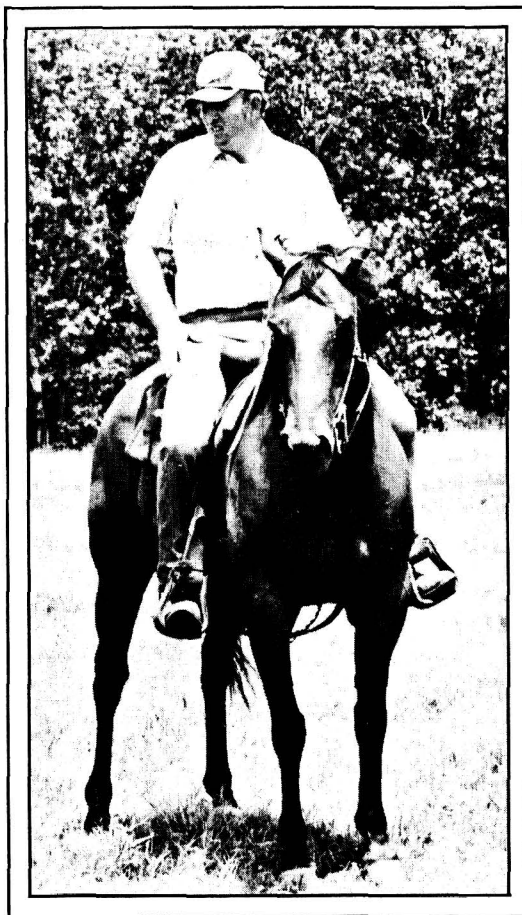


They Said It Couldn't Be Done

by Linda Wells



Harvey Lemmon at the ripe old age of 32 is first and foremost the head of Lemmon Cattle Enterprises.

In 1971, Harvey Lemmon's employers told him he couldn't succeed in the cattle business on his own. However, today, at the ripe old age of 32, he is first and foremost the head of the very successful Lemmon Cattle Enterprises, Woodbury, Ga. In addition to running his ranch, he serves as a board member of the Production Credit Assn., is a member of Farm Bureau and the Meriwether County Cattlemen's Assn., which he served as president for several terms. He is active in

the Georgia Cattlemen's Assn. as a member of the Stocker-Finisher Council and in 1975-76 was president of the Georgia Angus Assn. He has also judged various shows since becoming qualified as a certified Angus judge in 1976. Harvey's formula for success is not just a theory. It has been tried and proven true. The Lemmons have much to be proud of—a way of life, their accomplishments and prospects for the future. And it all began as a junior Angus member.

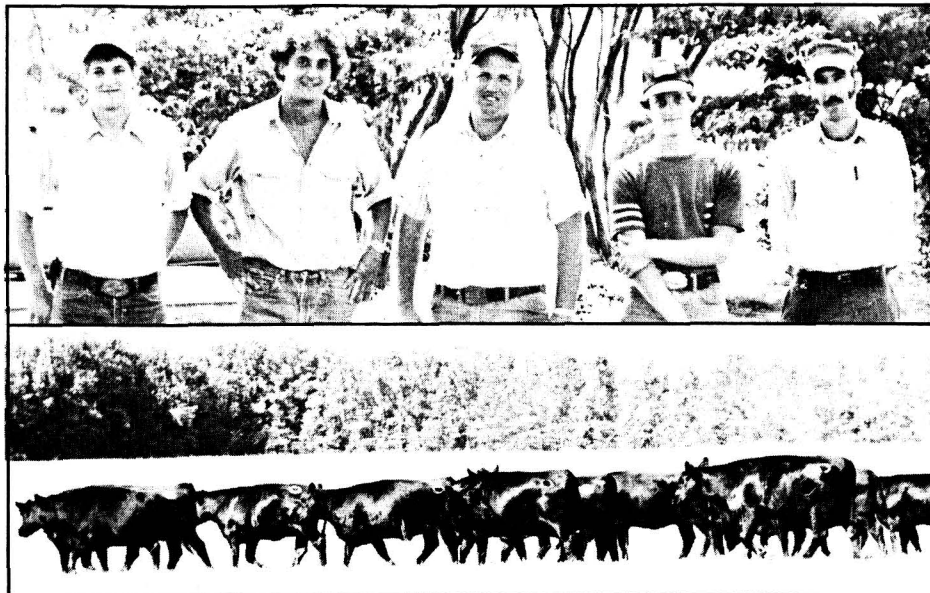
Few people thought Harvey Lemmon could make it on his own in the cattle business. "It was 1971," Harvey recalls, "The bottom just dropped out of the cattle business and recession set in." Times were rough. And Harvey had his doubts.

Like the time his first cow lost her calf, the cow died and Harvey broke his ankle. "My wife and I just sat down and cried." Or the time when Harvey, in addition to keeping up his own place, worked at the stockyards near Dupuy, hauling cattle from 7

a.m. till 1 or 2 the next morning, just to make ends meet.

"It's been a tough uphill swing all the way, but I kinda enjoy it," he says.

"I've done anything and everything honest in the cattle business and even some things outside the cattle business just to make this thing work," he explains. You see, Harvey Lemmon is not afraid of hard work, which seems to be the driving force behind his success. He had the guts and determination to get what he wanted, starting from nothing eight years ago. And to-



TOP PHOTO: Harvey's summer work crew are (from left) Dan Beckham, Glen Beckham, Harvey Lemmon, Doug Chapman and Jerry Schriber. LOWER PHOTO: The cattle at Lemmon Enterprises are distinctly marked with "lemon" brands.

day he has made what some may call phenomenal strides for being in the cattle business such a short time.

Keeps on Going

"I stick my neck out, take a chance and keep on going," Harvey says in his easy-going yet determined manner. There are, however, unlike Harvey, lots of folks in (or formerly in) the cattle business who are the first to find fault, the last to jump on the bandwagon and who are usually run over by progress because they're standing in the middle of the road. Harvey will never be accused of uncertainty, nor will he be run over by progress, because his determination has put together a herd of 208 registered and commercial Angus cows that measures up to any successful herd today.

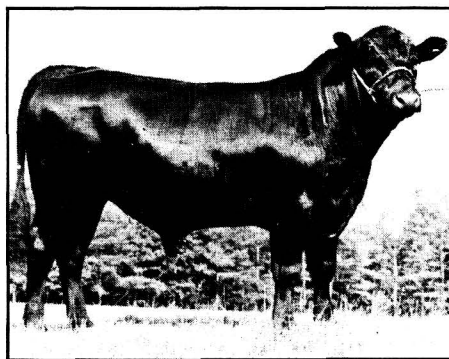
Harvey Lemmon and his 800-acre Angus ranch near Woodbury are situated in central Georgia, about 50 miles from the Alabama line. They're in the midst of what used to be peach and cotton country, covered with terraces put in by slave labor many years ago.

And even though he may not be classified as a "pioneer" Angus breeder, it certainly doesn't qualify him as a newcomer to the Angus business—nor a stranger to hard work.

The Beginning

Harvey's interest in the Angus business began in 1956 when he was nine years old. Carroll Grove, Waynesboro, Va., took Harvey "under his wing" and helped him select his first heifer. This cow produced four heifer calves in a row. The first was grand champion at the Virginia State Fair junior show. As a junior association member, Harvey volunteered to help various Angus breeders in his native state of Virginia. "They all helped me out and gave me an opportunity to learn, since my dad was disabled and couldn't."

In 1966 he was one of five finalists in the first National Junior Angus Showmanship



Penn State Superstar 178's first calves will begin arriving some time in January 1980.

Contest when the event was held in conjunction with the American Angus Breeders' Futurity in Lexington, Ky. This year Harvey made his 19th trip to the futurity, now held in Louisville, Ky. He went, not as an exhibitor but as a spectator, to keep up-to-date on the type of cattle winning the shows.

Emphasis on Performance

In reference to show cattle, Harvey feels that more emphasis needs to be placed on performance. "That's what counts," he says. "I expect my cows to make me a living. If a cow fails to produce a calf every year, she's culled and put into a beef lot." Harvey explains, "My beef lot is for anyone who wants a side of beef. I'll have a cull slaughtered, wrapped to specifications and delivered to the buyer. This is my way of turning a loss into a profit."

In the southeast, people breed their cattle strictly for performance. It's survival of the fittest. Cattle that do not perform are eliminated. But those that do are backed by sound, extensive, performance evaluation records to prove it, Harvey says. "My cows have got to perform when the times get tough." Describing his cows as being an optimum size for the southeast, Harvey says

that "Cows that are 1,300-1,400 lb. can't hack it down here. Size starts taking away from their fertility and milking ability. The environment is just too hard on them." He feeds his cows primarily as roughage converters, "things not meant for human consumption." From this, he expects them to wean big thrifty calves.

As Practical as Possible

Since the commercial market is Harvey's primary target, he keeps his operation as practical as possible. For instance, on his rented land he tries to keep things economical by building inexpensively and by using portable chutes. Another practical management practice includes his bull operation in which he feeds no creep, putting bulls through a "development period" rather than a testing program. The bulls are grazed and placed on a feeding regimen that consists primarily of by-products: 50% citrus pulp, 25% peanut skins and 25% peanuts. The peanuts and peanut skins are by-products of the Nabisco factory located in Woodbury, where Harvey contracts for the unused peanut portions.

"Most purebred cattlemen would say my bulls aren't extreme enough, not enough leg under them. But in this part of the country, once again, you've got to produce for your market. I'd rather sell 30 bulls at \$1,200 a round than one or two at \$7,500 apiece."

Makes It Work

Harvey makes it work, too. Because he gives his buyers what they want—good bulls to run with commercial cows that will produce soundness, good milking ability and fertility. "I try to keep this operation practical enough," he adds, "in case the bottom ever drops out of the cattle business again. I can take every bull, make a steer out of him, run him through winter grazing, sell him at 700 lb. and still make a profit."

Harvey is not totally commercial-oriented



LEFT: One of the 208 registered and commercial Angus cows at the Lemmon farm. CENTER: This roadside sign announces Harvey's fall bull sale to passers-by. RIGHT: The Lemmon family—Harvey, wife Nina and son Donnie.

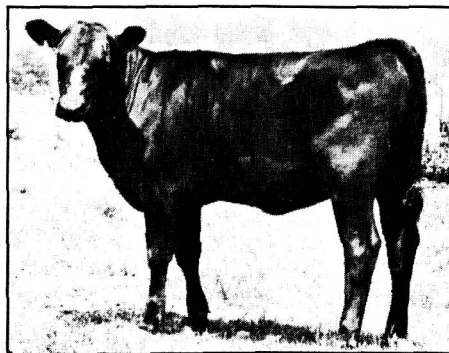
in seeking his market. He has a show barn full of cattle that he uses as a drawing card for business. "This brings people to my place that wouldn't come otherwise," he admits, "giving me an opportunity to show some of my other cattle." Among some of the cattle found in his show barn is a bull Harvey has used extensively in his breeding program, Penn State Superstar 178. Superstar had a 205-day adjusted weight of 720, with a ratio of 113, and a 365-day adjusted weight of 1,073, with a ratio of 102. In 1978 the bull tied for top weaning weight in the Pennsylvania State University Angus herd. Harvey is anxiously awaiting Superstar's first calves in January. He is also breeding some of his cows to Power Play.

VPI Graduate

Harvey graduated from Virginia Polytechnic Institute (VPI) in 1969. He then went to work for Millarden Angus Ranch, Woodbury. After a little more than two years, he decided if everyone else could struggle through the cattle business and hard times, he could too. During a period of depressed cattle prices, he bought the good cows no one else wanted.

"The idea struck me when I was buying feeder cattle for Millarden. I talked with an ole boy that wanted to sell his 32 cows, backed with Big Elban breeding. I couldn't sleep that night, so the next day I went out and traded for those cows." And at a time when the cattle market was dropping, Harvey took the first step and Lemmon Cattle Enterprises was well on its way.

Harvey has had two sales in the last two years. One, called Bull Swapping Days, was held jointly with Cripple Pines Farm, Fairburn. At this sale, buyers would bring a bull of any breed and "swap" or trade for another bull of equal value. But if the bull was worth more than trading value, the buyer and Harvey would work out the difference.



This Jan. 18 Shoshone heifer out of an Elban Bandolier-bred dam is in the show barn.

Second Sale

His other sale was called a Price Tag Sale, where prices were determined prior to sale time. Buyers could pick out the bulls they wanted and if more than one buyer chose the same bull, an auction was held between them to determine the buyer.

This year Harvey will hold a joint sale with Irvington Farms, Inc., West Point, at which time 100 2-year-old performance tested Angus bulls will be offered. The Nov. 27 Cowman's Opportunity Sale will be held in Harvey's new sale barn that will be completed some time in October.

In addition to running the ranch, Harvey still seems to find time for numerous other livestock industry activities. He is a board member of the Production Credit Assn., a member of Farm Bureau and the Meriwether County Cattlemen's Assn., which he served as president for several terms. He also has been active in the Georgia Cattlemen's Assn. as a member of the Stocker-Finisher Council. And in 1975-76 he served as president of the Georgia Angus Assn.

Judge

In 1976, Harvey became a certified Angus Judge and since that time has

judged the Tennessee State Fair, South Carolina Junior Angus Show, Little International at VPI and the East Tennessee Angus Assn. Show & Sale.

Harvey recalls when he and his wife Nina moved to Georgia. "Nina didn't much want to move away from Virginia. It was a little too far from home. But she told me to do what I thought was right, so we moved to Georgia and I went to work for Millarden."

Nina, who has a Masters degree in early childhood, has been teaching kindergarten for 11 years. "Harvey always says that's how we've survived," Nina teases. She has been teaching at the Flat River Academy in Woodbury for 10 years and now is departmental head of first through third grades. Harvey and Nina also have an 8-year-old son, Donnie, who begins first grade at the Flat River Academy this fall.

Not Just Theory

Harvey's formula for success is not just a theory. It has been tried and proven true. But, more important, the Lemmon family is an outstanding example of a great American concept. Through their beliefs and perseverance, the folks at Lemmon Enterprises prove that a small family farm can be self-sufficient. The dividends it continues to pay are countless, but among them is pride.

"I don't know exactly how to put this, but I figure the fella upstairs has looked after my business more than I have. You see, there are three things in my life that are important to me: (1) My family, (2) my church and (3) my cattle. Whoever needs help at the time is the one who gets the attention. It's kinda like the squeaky wheel is the one that gets the grease."

Nevertheless, the Lemmons have much to be proud of—a way of life, their accomplishments and prospects for the future. And it all began as a junior Angus member. 