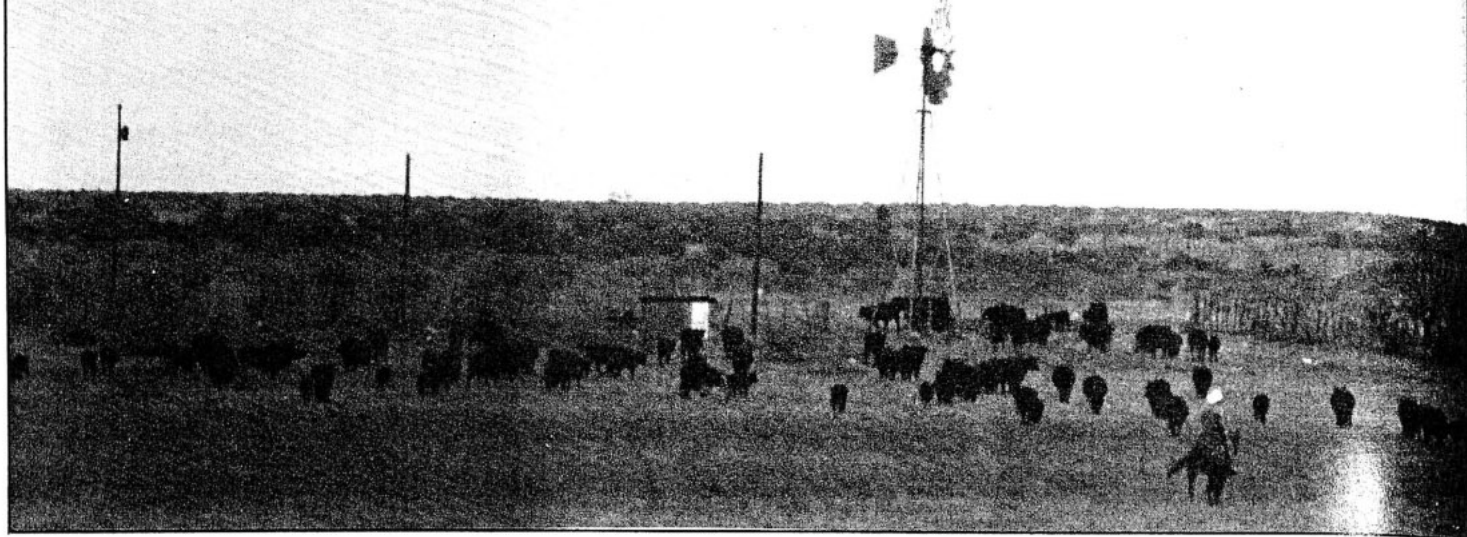


She's got Ranchin in her blood



by Marcia Chamberlain
Public Relations Assistant

Ranching and raising commercial Angus has been part of Floyce Masterson Bates' life for a long time.

A native of Mississippi, she came to Texas to attend Texas Tech University in Lubbock. After a brief stay in her home state, she returned to Texas to marry Tom Masterson and raise commercial Angus cattle on the JY Ranch. At one time, the JY spread, owned by Tom and Bob Masterson was considered America's largest commercial Angus operation.

"I fell in love with this country when I first came here," Floyce says.

When Tom Masterson passed away in 1953, Floyce continued running their 73,000-acre ranch located near Paducah, Texas, for another three years.

"During that period, we had around 2,000 straight-bred Angus cows on the ranch," she said.

After several years, Floyce leased the land and sold her cow herd.

However, she could not stay away from the land and Angus cattle any longer. In 1970, she got back into the commercial Angus business and purchased 300 cow-calf pairs. At that time, she changed the name of the ranch to F Cross, representing her name and her religious faith.

"Ranching is in my blood. I love animals and I'm happier when I'm working with them."

"I had to borrow the money at the time to buy these cattle, and people told me that since I was a woman I wouldn't be able to borrow," she says. "However, I did it." "Before I knew it, I had the loan paid off and had my cow herd built up."

Right now, F Cross Ranch is grazing approximately 850 cows on 30,000 acres of



Floyce Bates poses in front of a rock fence on the F Cross Ranch. Once part of a corral, the fence is the oldest of its kind in north Texas.

grassland which consists of blue stem, western wheat grass, mesquite and buffalo grass.

Floyce likes to run anywhere from 800-1,000 cows depending on range conditions.

Bull calves are steered at a young age. Both steer and heifer calves are sold privately at weaning time which is usually in September.

"The buyers are given the chance to make cuts on all the calves, but they don't," Floyce says. "Our cattle are in good condition when we sell them, and we pride ourselves on that."

"We usually get top dollar for our cattle. I consult with people about the market and Bill Bates (her husband) has been a big help in that area."

The F Cross Angus herd is a recommended herd under the American Angus Assn. commercial herd program.

Presently, seven bulls are put with every 100 cows. Their rule of thumb is to keep the Angus cows until they are 8 years old then

sell them.

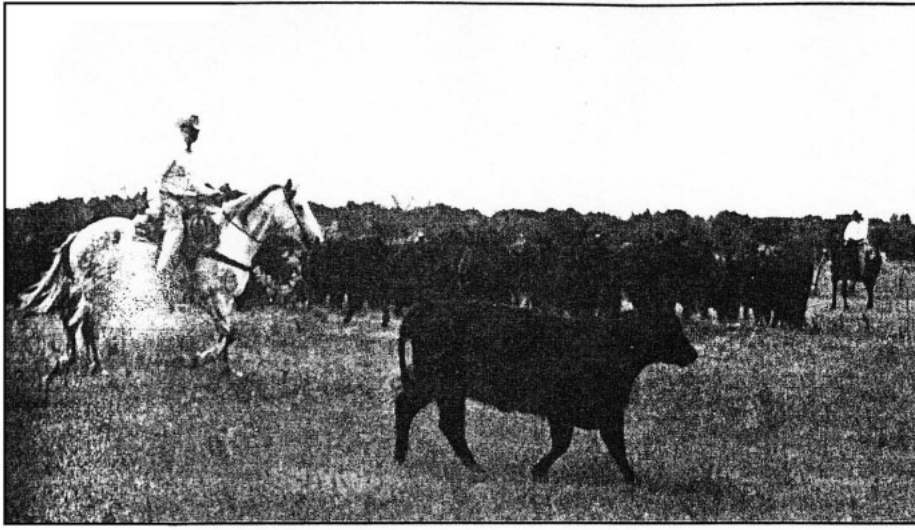
"We are constantly culling. When we have a truck load the cattle are shipped to market. Each year, we sell around 100 cows and keep out 150 yearling replacement heifers," she continues. "We then make another cut on replacement heifers before breeding, and usually end up with 100 to keep."

"We aren't confronted with disease problems. We have a minimum amount. There are no worries of pinkeye or sunburned udders on Angus cattle. Plus, they are excellent milkers and have little calving difficulties."

This year's 90 percent calf crop is a good indication of their lack of problems. Normally, calf crops range from 80 to 90 percent.

Somes of her favorite bulls have been sons of Ankonian Dynamo and Emulous Pride 70. "These bulls will stand up in this terrain," she says. "Now most of our replacements are Dynamo strain out of Emulous cows."

Bulls are kept as long as they are serviceable, or until they reach 7 years of age.



Over 850 cows graze on the pastures at the F Cross Ranch.

Every year all bulls on the F Cross spread are fertility tested. Breeding season runs from February through July.

"Our bulls are well-fed and kept in good shape," she says.

Although the F Cross Ranch is not set up for an A.I. program, Floyce readily acknowledges the advantages and disadvantages A.I. would bring.

"With all our cows spread out, it would be hard to keep track of them when they were in heat," she mentions. "However, if we could A.I., we would. Those 65 bulls are grazing

and being fed for seven months without providing any services. So it's money out of our pocket. If we could A.I. think of the money we could save."

When asked about crossbreeding Floyce replies, "There has always been Angus cattle on this ranch, and it's hard for me to think of raising anything else but Angus."

The F Cross Ranch has been around for a long time and has raised Angus cattle for many years. Chances are they will continue to do so as long as Floyce Bates is a part of it.

