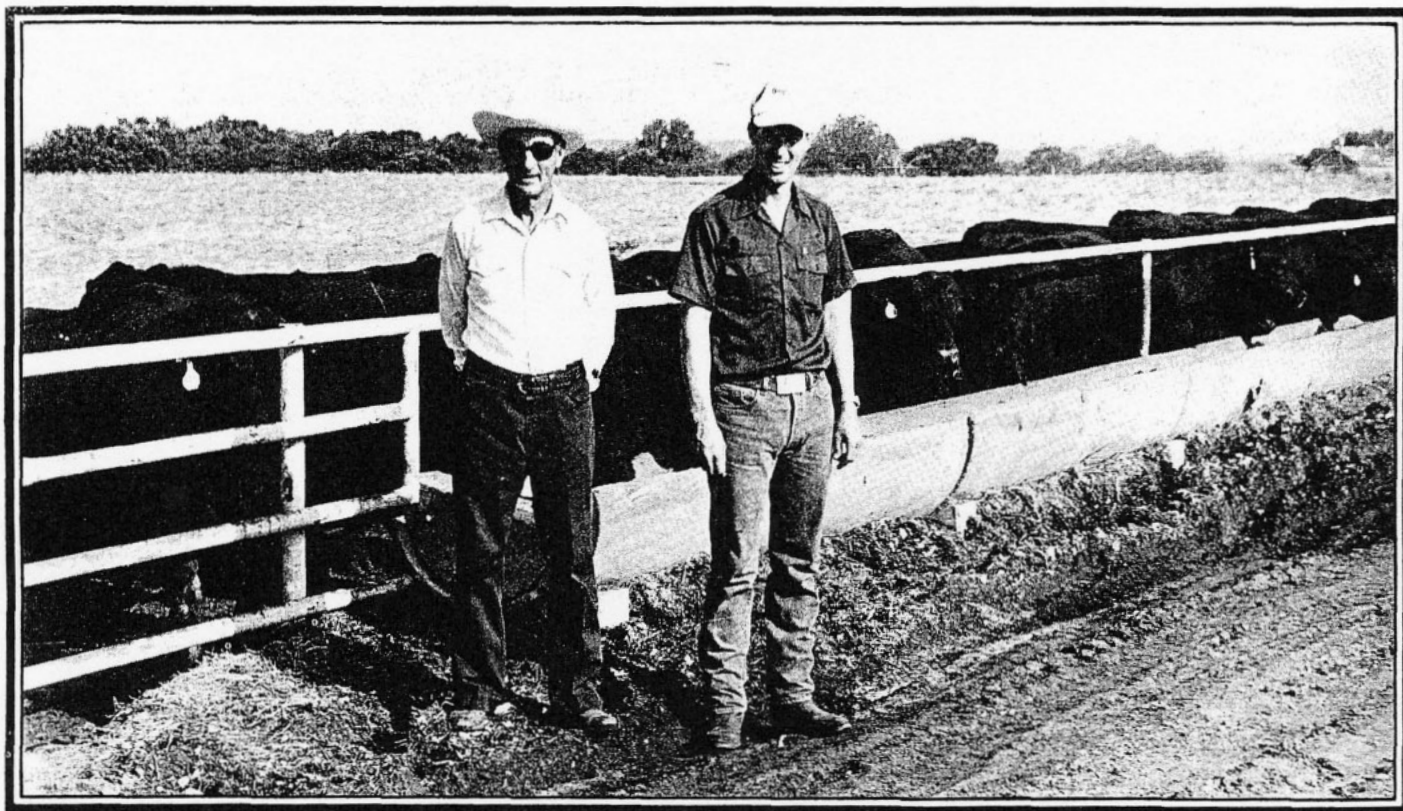


by Frank J. Buchman

Frank Buchman is editor of the Kansas-based publication Grass and Grain, a position he has held for the past 10½ years. In addition, he finds time to do some freelance writing. In this article he highlights the history and current management at one of Kansas' oldest herds.

DALEBANKS



Francis Perrier and son Tom, owners of Dalebanks Angus, raise Angus with the same objective with which the ranch was started 80 years ago: To raise bulls for the commercial cattle industry.

Angus history abounds at Dalebanks. While the Kansas Angus Assn. coordinates activities with the American Angus Assn.'s 100th anniversary, one reflects history of the breed in Kansas.

A number of longtime producers can remember families and cattle prominent before the turn of the century, but one of the older herds existing today originated shortly after the 100-year calendar was changed.

Dalebanks Angus at Eureka in Greenwood County was formed in 1904 by E.L. Barrier, grandfather of the present owner and manager, Tom Perrier. Barrier operated the herd until he passed away in 1943 and management was turned over to Tom's

father, Francis Perrier, who still helps with the operation.

Although the Angus herd is nearly 80 years old, the Flint Hills ranch where it's located dates back to Tom's mother's mother's family (Loy) in 1873.

"This is the Loy and Barrier homestead," explains Francis, whose first wife, Tom's mother, passed away in 1952.

Cattle have been registered in the name of Dalebanks from the start. It came from the Loy family in northern England, near where Angus originated.

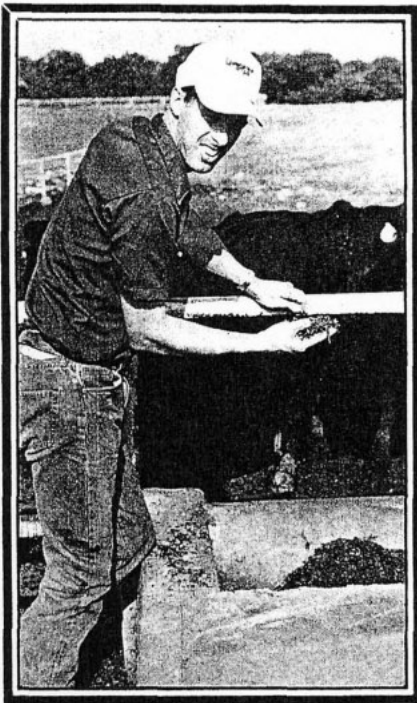
Dedicated to Producing Angus

There have been changes in the cattle industry, but the objective at Dalebanks has

remained the same: "to raise bulls for the commercial cattle industry," according to the Perriers.

"We have never lost our dedication to producing Angus cattle," the men agree. "We keep the commercial man's needs first in our minds. We are producing cattle to grow rapidly and have the frame and weight to sell while maintaining the important maternal traits, calving ease, carcass characteristics and market acceptance," continues Tom, a '67 K-State animal science graduate.

"We won't condemn another breed, but Angus have more advantages to provide quality genetics for crossbreeding programs," Francis adds.



About 700 acres of cropland provide feed for the herd.

First cows were purchased from the Parker, Parrish and Miller herd at Hudson and a few additional females came from Iowa.

"Practically all of our cows relate to those original females," says Francis, a graduate engineer who had ag interests in Lyon County before taking over Dalebanks.

"Through the years, it's been our policy to buy the best bulls we could find and we've introduced new blood from all over the United States," Francis relates. "Back a long time ago, Mr. Barrier even went to New York to select a bull that was imported from England and rode back with him in a boxcar.

"We've used a lot of different bulls, but I'd estimate we discarded over 50 percent of them. If one did work, he stayed here a long time.

"We made the most improvement in the '40s when we used the Marshall line of breeding. At one time, we had the strongest influence of Marshall breeding of anyone around," the senior Perrier continued.

Avoided Small Cattle Problems

In the '50s and '60s when smaller cattle were selected in show circles, Dalebanks stayed with "middle-of-the-road Angus" and consequently "rolled with the punches."

"Our original Angus were large cattle, probably not as big as today, but larger than were popular in the early '60s," Francis relates.

"I can remember asking Dad why we were culling the biggest calves," Tom recalled.

Following the Marshall line, Dalebanks "naturally" moved to the Eileenmeres which Francis says were "definitely larger than the two most popular lines of the time: Bandoilers and Sunbeam.

"We stayed away from some of the problems of small cattle," he continued.

With the rapid turnover of breeders in the purebred industry, longevity is of significance and the senior Perrier is anxious to point out that this hasn't been easy.

"Mr. Barrier told me if he'd had to sell out after the winter of '37, he wouldn't have got enough to pay the winter feed bill. It was dry and that was the same time brucellosis hit. People were reluctant to buy cows. We had five years of drought in the mid '50s too when it was hard to keep the herd together. It really takes a lot of dedication," Francis repeats.

Emulous blood was blended into the herd with "good results forming an 'identifiable' genetic base.

Record System Meaningful

"It's been our philosophy to know the genetics of our cows and the best way to do that is to raise them. If cows aren't alike and kept in similar environments, it's hard to have a record system that's meaningful. We try to manage our program so the records will be meaningful," Tom explained.

Although they had been recording calf weights several years, Dalebanks enrolled in the Angus Herd Improvement Records system in 1966 and has maintained all information since that time.

"I think this is the best system there is. It provides a lot of useful information.

"It's easy to cull the bottom cows, but harder to pick the average ones. With records, the cows with 100 pound lighter calves show right up," Tom said.

Having considered purchase of a computer, the Perriers haven't found one that is "sophisticated enough to work with the AHIR system."

The herd now includes 300 registered cows with about 130 mated artificially to bulls owned by Dalebanks as well as other bulls with semen available commercially.

"We use outside bulls for the improvement and genetics they can provide and to compare them with our own bulls," Tom said, noting that about 60 calves each year are from "outside bulls."

"We've been successful breeding to outside bulls, but some extremely popular bulls haven't done as good as we'd hoped. The bulls of our own breeding have been quite comparable," Francis inserts.

Bell Boy Barometer K16 is one sire, bred by and co-owned with Nichols of Iowa, the Perriers use extensively and who has sons in service. Another bull, Dalebanks Emulous 7G3219, was raised in the herd and is used as a main sire naturally.

Four "outside bulls" used artificially are PS Power Play, QAS Traveler, Shoshone Intend and Nichols Landmark.

"These are performance bulls. They're known for growth, but also for maternal traits and calving ease," Tom points out.

Sound Management Practices

The cow herd is divided with about two-thirds calving in the spring and the other third in the fall.

"We have a restricted period with the bulls out about 80 days, but most of the calves are dropped in the first 30 days, starting in late February and then again in late September," Tom said.

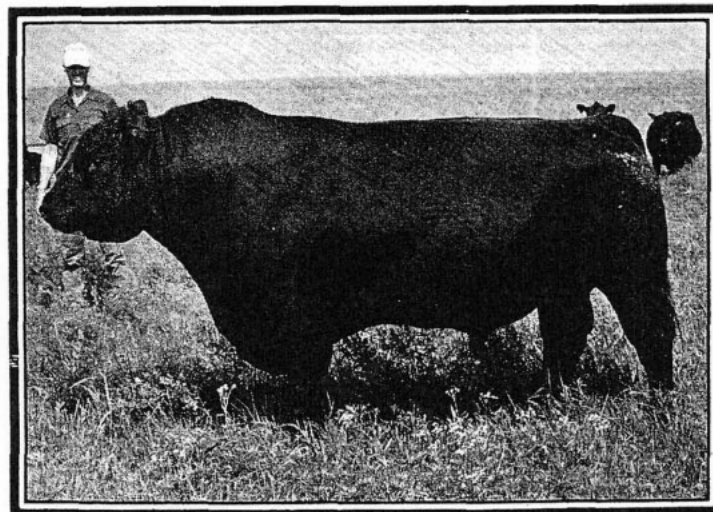
With heat detection a headache in the A.I. program, various products have been used for synchronization. "We've had excellent conception, about 70 percent on the cows and over 60 percent on the heifers," the manager continued. All heifers are mated the first time artificially, usually a week ahead of cows.

About 100 bulls, 60 bred heifers and usually "a package of middle-age cows" are marketed annually.

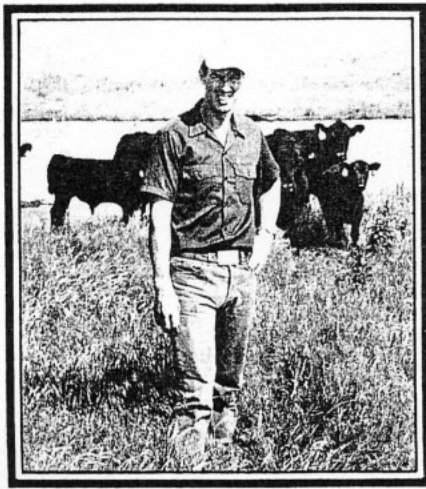
"We sell about 60 of the previous year's bull calves and the bred heifers in our annual production sale during November and then have the fall born bulls to sell in the spring.

"We keep the bulls growing so they'll weigh 1,200 to 1,400 lb. and be ready to handle about 25 cows at 18 months of age," explained Tom, noting that they are kept near the headquarters instead of on pastures.

Cull calves have sometimes been fed out, but are usually grouped with purchased



Bell Boy Barometer K16 is one sire the Perriers have used extensively.



A 300-cow herd is maintained on this Flint Hills operation which sells 100 bulls annually.

calves, summer grazed and marketed.

With 3,500 acres of owned and leased Flint Hill pastures, the cows remain out year round except for limited fall grazing milo stubble and when selected ones are in corals for artificial mating. About 700 acres of cropland produces feed for the herd. "If there is an excess, we save it for the next year," Francis said.

On winter pasture, cows receive alfalfa one day and rolled milo is spread on the ground the next. "They are moved around the pasture and fed in a new place every day," he said.

Doing only a limited amount of pasture burning. Dalebanks management claims: "We've had more success spraying 2, 4-D from a ground rig. It destroys brush and early competition and seems to stimulate the grass. We usually have a surplus of grass in the pastures we spray."

Rotation grazing has been tried, but is not used very much. Early intensive grazing of feeders has also been done successfully a couple years.

Winter water supply comes from various sources including ponds, creeks and springs. Cows have access to a high phosphorus mineral all the time.

Records show weaning weights have moved up in the past six years to average 561 pounds last fall. Yearling weights this spring averaged 1,002 on 90 bulls.

"I expect we saw the most improvement in weaning weights five to seven years ago and I don't see too much more gain there. I would think our yearling weights will still come up some," Tom analyzed. "At one time, Angus didn't have the size, but now most Angus bulls will sire cattle that hit choice at 1,050 to 1,150 lb. without getting fat and yield a number 2 carcass," Tom said.

Although the manager desires to keep a "moderate" size cow of 1,100 to 1,150 lb., he realizes that with use of 2,200 to 2,500 lb. bulls, cow size will increase.

"We want to refine it though. We're going back and concentrating on keeping Angus' calving ease and milking ability.

"The fact that Angus are known for their carcass traits is to be complimented but there are a lot of other factors that are important to the breed," Tom said.

Showing Not a Priority

Showing has not been a major objective at Dalebanks, but Francis does recall one specific show experience. His market steer entry at the American Royal averaged weighing 1,178 lb. and steers in the group that won were rolling fat at 970 lb. each. "We still came home with a lot of money," he says.

In recent years, cattle from the herd, shown by Dalebanks and by purchasers, have placed high at a number of shows including the Kansas Angus Futurity and the Kansas Beef Expo.

Tom explains, "We've shown very little, but we're not condemning them; they're an excellent promotion tool. We just haven't put the time and effort into it. We may go to shows and sales, but I can't see that we'll ever go on the circuit.

"The summer showing shows this year is a good deal. It'll be an early event for Kansas breeders to compare, learn and not have to compete against large outfits that go to all the major shows," said Tom, who is vice president of the Kansas Angus Assn. and active in other Angus leadership.

Optimistic About Future

For the future of the Angus breed, Tom says, "Angus have emerged as the common denominator of crossbreeding programs. It is the breed with the most good points and the least bad points, but I realize it's just a part of crossbreeding in the commercial industry.

"We've seen a lot of drastic changes in Angus and we're going to see more changes. Most of all, I think we're going to have more good Angus cattle. More people will have a greater availability of good Angus and they will buy them for other reasons than for use on first calf heifers," the manager analyzed.

For the beef industry in general, he continued, "It's been tough in any business to make money with interest rates so high, but I think the cattle business will get better. I don't see any great boom, but I hope it will be more profitable.

"I do think the industry needs to be more efficient. I was all for the beef check-off, but I think some of the funds need to go into research development of new products, such as meats for cooking in microwaves," Tom said.

Francis Perrier's two other sons were part of the operation while growing up but are no longer in the business. There is one full time and a part-time employee.

Tom's wife, Carolyn, also a '67 KSU grad, is a member of the Angus auxiliary and the three children are becoming interested in the Angus business. They live in the home built by Tom's great grandfather in 1906.

It is apparent, the Perriers believe in Angus. Dedication has made the historical Dalebanks herd what it is today. **AJ**