



Finished Angus steers in the Hartman and Hartman Feedlot near Pueblo, Colo., ready for slaughter at Litvak Meat Co. in Denver. The cattle were produced by Colorado Angus Breeders who retained ownership of the cattle and fed them out as a group. They sold on the rail for \$1.11 and \$1.10 per pound.

Conquering one of the small breeder's woes: the culls

How can you sell the cull cattle from your small registered Angus herd as feeder steers and heifers, and get premium prices?

That's a question many small-to-medium-sized Angus breeders have to deal with. Most don't have enough steers and heifers to make a marketable package of feeder cattle or to fill a custom feedlot pen.

Seven Colorado Angus breeders have found an answer. They combined their 50 head of cattle into a single feedlot pen,

then sold the cattle for top prices, even premium prices, to a CAB packer in Denver. Dorothy Hartman of Hartman and Hartman Feedlot, where the cattle were finished, says when all expenses were paid, the seven breeders netted the equivalent of \$1 per pound for their feeder cattle.

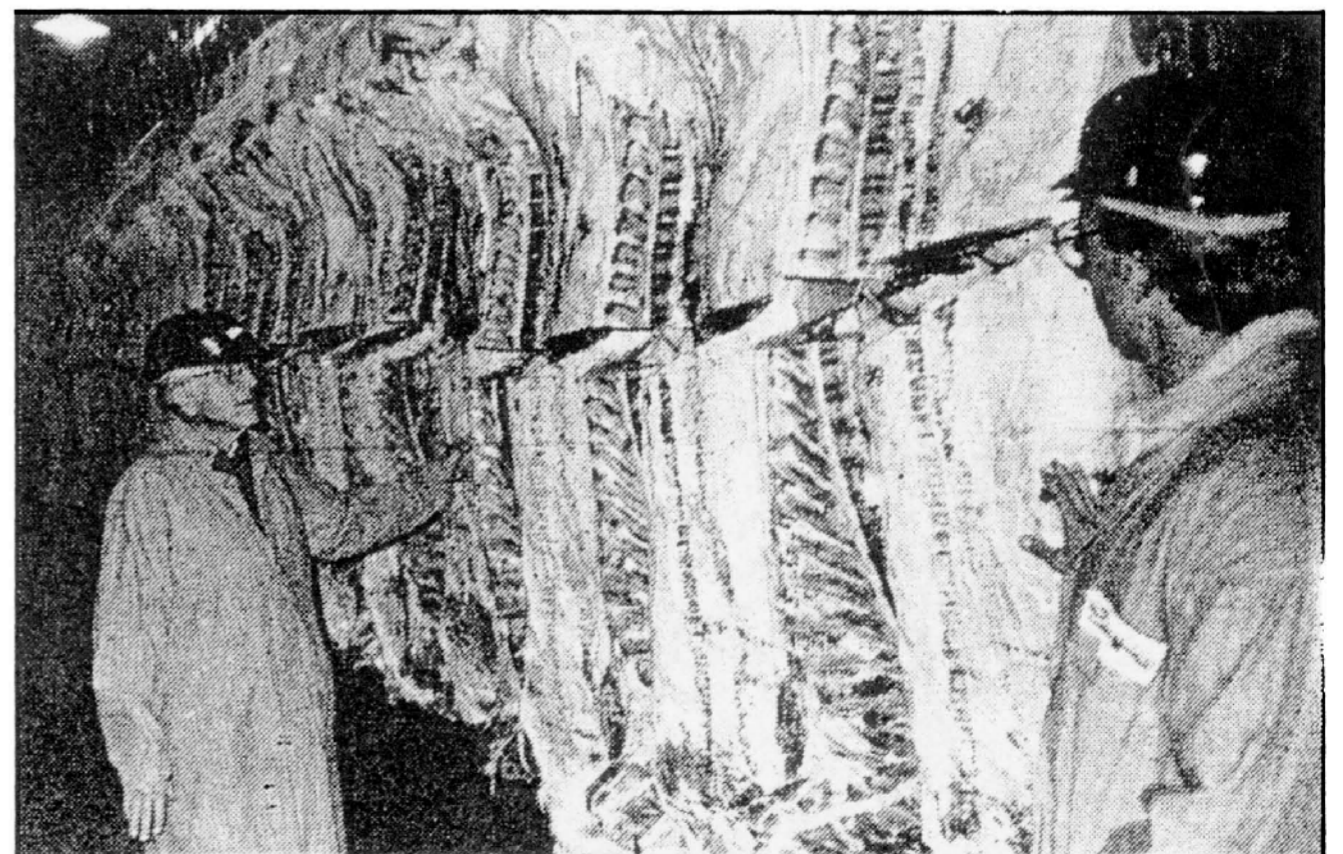
The idea was pushed by Dorothy, Orvil, and Greg Hartman, owners of the Hartman and Hartman Feedlot near Pueblo and also registered Angus cattle breeders. They knew that Litvak Meat

Company in Denver needed more properly fed Angus cattle for the Certified Angus Beef program. They also knew many Angus breeders had small groups of Angus steers and heifers that could produce ideal CAB carcasses. So they contacted the people and offered them a program to custom feed their cattle and market them as a group. They received 50 head that went on feed October 12, 1986. The largest group of cattle from one breeder was 16 head, but when fed and marketed as a single unit, the

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Leonard Litvak (left), Litvak Meat Company, Denver, and Greg Hartman, Hartman Angus Ranch, Pueblo, look over a set of Certified Angus Beef carcasses, bred by Colorado Angus breeders, fed in the Hartman feedlot, and slaughtered at Litvak. Some 90 percent of the carcasses graded Choice and have qualified for the CAB program.



Inspecting the ribeye area of CAB carcasses in the Litvak Meat Co. plant in Denver.

By Keith Evans

Director of Public Relations

breeders held the feed efficiency and marketing clout of a large operation.

The cattle were a varied lot, ranging from a stunted heifer that went in weighing 290 pounds to some large growthy steers. Because of this the cattle were marketed in two bunches in early and late June. Some 90 percent of the carcasses graded Choice or better, with one Prime. What's more, half qualified as Certified Angus Beef and earned a one-cent per pound premium paid on carcass weight.

Cost of gain for all the steers was 42 cents a pound, and the average daily gain was 3.2 pounds per day. This was especially good considering the steers were on a chopped hay and corn silage ration for the first 100 days before being switched to a hot ration the final 100 days or so.

O'Kane Angus Ranch, Arvada, Colo., had the largest group of cattle, 16 head. Their steers averaged 704 pounds carcass weight and the heifers were 575 pounds. They brought \$1.11 per pound for the first draft and \$1.10 per pound when the second bunch were sold, according to Joanne O'Kane. In addition, six head qualified for CAB and received an additional cent-a-pound premium. O'Kane was extremely pleased with the program, and they plan to be a part of the next group.

Total costs for feed, yardage, interest etc., was \$239 per head, said Dorothy Hartman. The calves averaged 540 pounds when they went on feed and around 1,150 pounds as finished cattle. This means the participants netted about \$1 per pound for their feeder cattle.

In addition to being a good way to merchandise cull cattle, the program could also be used by breeders to test sires. There was a big difference in the performance of sire groups, Hartman said. Some gained up to five pounds a day and had feed costs as low as 31 cents a pound.

Although the Hartman feedlot used only one pen for the registered cattle experiment, they have the capacity to expand. Their feedlot, small by Colorado standards, has a one-time capacity of 600 head, and they would like to interest more registered Angus breeders in participating.

A similar program would be good for many Angus breeders around the country, believes Joanne O'Kane. Breeders could go together and custom feed their cattle at a feedlot near a CAB packing plant. It would even be a good project for a state or local Angus Association, she said.

The Colorado Angus breeders who took part in the program were Harold Bolder, La Salle; Kiowa Creek Ranch, Kiowa; O'Kane Angus Ranch, Arvada; Don Neilson, Alfred Neilson, and Ross Neilson, all of La Junta; and Hartman Angus Ranch, Pueblo. All plan to be a part of the program in 1987-88. **AJ**