

Kenneth Clark can lay his hand on every Craigie female.

CRAIGIE-INGLESIDE

. . . West Virginia mountains . . . lush grass . . . a respect for tradition and for the Angus female . . . 200 cows, each gentle as a kitten. And behind it all . . . Kenneth Clark.

by Ann Gooding

Kenneth A. Clark may not be the only man pushing 80 who owns and actively manages 200 Angus cows. But odds are he's one of the few. That alone could probably qualify him for the remarkable category, but that's just part of the story.

Not only does he, at age 79, manage 200 cows. He does it his way. He doesn't promote. He doesn't show. He's not particularly concerned with merchandising. He just happens to enjoy raising cattle.

He can lay his hand on every cow and knows every cow's name, her family, her daughters. In fact, that's why he holds the herd to 200. The grass on Craigie-Ingleside, his farm near Alderson, W.Va., could support more, but if the herd were larger, he might have to carry a book to the pastures.

With 200 cows, he can carry the information in his head.

Background

Clark happens to know more than a little bit about beef cattle breeding. His formal education was in genetics, and he spent 25 years as a livestock buyer for Esskay Co., Baltimore, Md., the largest meat packing company on the east coast. His interest in cattle has taken him to Perth 15 times, and he attended every Chicago show from 1918 to 1960. Besides that, he is a fourth-generation cattleman.

Clark's is a Hereford heritage. His father and grandfather, after migrating to the Craig, Neb., area following the Civil War, raised whitefaces. It was geography that put him in the Angus business.

After earning a bachelor's degree at the University of Nebraska and a masters in

genetics from Iowa State University, Clark accepted a position in the Animal Husbandry Dept. at the University of Maryland. After a 10-year stint, he turned to farming, then became a livestock buyer.

In 1944 he bought his first farm, paying \$25 an acre for land near Easton, Md., just 10 miles from Wye Plantation. (Wye, incidentally, was in operation at the time but was not yet merchandising cattle.) When Clark decided to stock the farm, he found no neighboring Herefords, only Angus. So Angus it was.

Initial Purchase

By his own admission, Clark's first purchase hardly proved successful. He bought two females at the 1947 Wye River dispersion—the cow for which he paid \$300 was killed by lightning and her \$150 daughter proved a non-breeder.

Next time out Clark had better luck. He paid \$300 a round for his choice of 60 out of 125 cows from his friend Jack Laughlin of Lands End Farm near Queenstown, Md. That was in September. Clark remembers it as a good deal, because the following February Mr. Laughlin sold the remaining 65 head at an average of \$675.

Then came the entire Pleasant Valley herd, another 30 cows, and Clark was in the Angus business. He dubbed his herd Craigie, taking the name from his Nebraska home.

That was 33 years ago. Since then the herd has been virtually closed—fewer than a dozen females have been introduced in the last 15 years. Herd bulls, for the most part, have been home-raised. The few infusions have come from related breeding—Wye, Scottish, Irish—to introduce, as Clark puts it, a trickle of outside blood.

The Scottish Connection

Clark has a special respect for tradition, for the Angus families and Angus females and their Scottish heritage. This Scottish connection goes back to 1922 when, fresh out of college, Clark crossed the Atlantic on a cattle boat, then spent more than two months in Scotland and England. During that time he visited several beef cattle operations, among them Ballinallock and Har-

viestoun, both historic homes of Angus cattle. He left the United Kingdom impressed with its cattle; he liked their fertility, their udders, their fleshing quality, their general reliability. He was to emphasize these traits in his own cattle. And he was to import.

In fact, it was an imported bull that led to Clark's association with Wye Plantation.

While Clark was still in the meat packing business, manager James Lingle of Wye Plantation was on the lookout for imported blood. And it so happened that the president of the Esskay Co. had imported some cattle, among them a bull named Gaird of Dalmeny.

Clark relates the story: "Lingle inquired about imported bulls and I told him about Gaird of Dalmeny. He wanted the bull. The problem was Lingle, a cautious man with money, wasn't one to part easily with it and the price was \$1,250. Gaird's owner decided to let Lingle pay in kind, Lingle agreed, and for the next several months pigs, lambs, old cows, even goats arrived at the packing house in payment."

The Beginning

That was the beginning of what proved to be a lasting friendship and a strong business relationship. Clark and Lingle made two trips together to Perth, importing, among others, Elector of Shempston, George of Swiftbrook, Prince of Malpas—names found in both Wye and Craigie pedigrees. Clark bought Genkins and Geordus (Irish-bred bulls by Prince Paul of Baroldby) in dam during the Kilmullen dispersion. Subsequently, Lingle took Geordus, Clark kept Genkins and each thought he had made the best deal.

Clark and Lingle both practiced line-breeding. And they are credited with being among the first to concentrate on the maternal characteristics of the Scottish cattle.

One of Clark's bulls, Black Lode of Craigie, was leased by Wye for a season, the only outside bull to be used in that herd in more than 20 years. And Clark custom-fed the first bulls Wye ever tested.

The Wye connection still exists. Clark sits on the Wye Advisory Board for the Univer-

sity of Maryland, owner of the Wye herd since 1978.

Move to West Virginia

About the time most people would be thinking about retirement, Clark considered selling the herd. But his wife put a stop to that—said he wouldn't be pleasant living with if he didn't have cattle.

Then in 1969, with nearly 70 years behind him, Clark moved lock, stock, barrel and cow herd to West Virginia. The value of Maryland real estate, he explains, was such that one couldn't afford to have cattle walking around on it. So he bought 2,550 acres near Alderson, of which he still owns and operates 1,280 acres.

A prettier setting may not exist. The Clark home sits atop a mountain at the head of a narrow valley with a breathtaking view of cattle and meadows and Blue Ridge Mountains.

But aside from its beauty, this is prime cattle country. Deep limestone soil supports an abundance of strong native bluegrass, one of the things that sold Clark on his new location. During his cattle buying years, he had discovered that the best grass-fed cattle came from upper Wyoming and Montana, the next best from several counties in West Virginia and southwestern Virginia. He opted for West Virginia.

A Real Wilderness

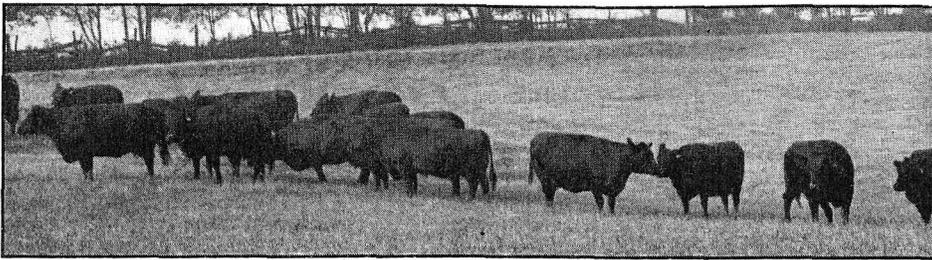
It was a real wilderness when Clark arrived. "You couldn't see a man on horseback at 100 yards," he says, and there were no roads, no fences. Even so, Craigie cattle were not the first to thrive there. The farm's original owner, Sam Anderson, had been a cattle trader who grass-fattened steers, then drove them from the Alderson location to the railroad at Ft. Spring. Even before that, thousands of 3- and 4-year-old grass-fattened export cattle were produced in this area.

The farm has since been fenced and cleared and roads have been built. Clark admits to only one problem. All the cows have to do, he says, is walk through the grass and they get too fat.

With the West Virginia farm came the name Ingleside, as luck would have it, a

*A summer scene
—lush pastures and
Angus heifers.*





The Craigie-Ingleside program puts emphasis on females.

Scottish term for fireside. So with due respect for the farm's history, not to mention his liking for things Scottish, Clark's new farm became Craigie-Ingleside.

Things Scottish

Speaking of things Scottish, one of Clark's favorite topics is the Scottish system for naming cattle. Because it relies on family names and those names are carried by the female line, the Scottish system fits hand-in-glove with Clark's admiration for Scottish cattle and his emphasis on females. The system, Clark explains, has little use for digits, initials. The names are simple, easily remembered, pleasing to the ear, short and dignified. Made up of one or two words, they start with the first letter of the animal's family name (which is carried by the dam); the herd name also can be added. This system not only honors tradition, Clark says, it identifies the animal's family and herd of origin. For example, Edela of Craigie belongs to the Erica family and comes from the Craigie herd. Likewise, Jols Eric of Craigie, from the same herd, springs from the Juana Erica family.

Presently there are seven families represented at Craigie-Ingleside—Blackbird, Erica, Juana Erica, Jilt, Georgina, Miss Burgess, Pride of Aberdeen—each original Ballindallock and Harviestoun families. Alexina, another lesser known family, has been a great source of herd bulls used in this and other herds. Clark, incidentally, has traced each of his cows back to the foundation cow in the herd book—and he has complete sets of both American and Scottish herd books.

The Bull Market

In was Clark's interest in names that led, in a rather unorthodox manner, to a steady market for his bulls.

About 1970 Clark noticed that someone in Whitman, Neb., was using the Craigie name. It seems this breeder had purchased a Craigie bull, Alectus of Craigie, liked him and began tacking the Craigie name on his own cattle. Clark, who was not particularly

happy about this use of his herd name, wrote the breeder, Martin Connealy. So began an exchange that revealed some interesting facts: (1) Clark sat across the aisle from Connealy's mother for two years in high school back in Nebraska, (2) Connealy had a bull market and (3) Clark had bulls.

Clark and Connealy struck a deal and since 1971 Connealy has purchased Clark's entire bull calf crop, which he then merchandises in his annual sale. And Craigie bulls have been well received by Nebraska buyers, the majority of them commercial ranchers.

Spring bull calves leave Craigie-Ingleside for Nebraska Oct. 1, fall calves load out April 1. These calves stay on their mothers until they ship. And in nearly 10 years all have arrived healthy, safe and sound. Not one has even needed a needle. But then Craigie cattle are hardy—and healthy. And that health is well guarded.

Herd Health

Clark routinely vaccinates for blackleg, leptospirosis and vibriosis. There's never been a Bang's or TB reactor in the herd's history. Nor has there ever been a case of scours. Nothing is done to bring germs inside. Generally Clark does not visit other herds, nor does he attend many shows and sales. Any animal brought in is quarantined.

Herd management at Craigie-Ingleside is as uncomplicated as Clark can make it. The herd is never housed; it is fed, bred and calved outside year-round. Fall calves are creep-fed, spring calves are not. The majority of the females calve in the fall, and Clark plans to increase that practice until the entire herd is on a fall calving schedule.

Clark has no professional herdsman. Three men work for him—two of them, incidentally, were born on the farm and have always lived there.

Natural service is the rule, although there have been two exceptions. A dozen cows were inseminated artificially in 1968 and six head were bred A.I. last fall. Clark may A.I. a few head this fall as well.

Clark does not tolerate white—says his bull trade is death on it. Many of his bull buyers run Hereford cows, he explains, and they've had their fill of problems with white udders.

Clark values big, level, well-shaped feet on his bulls, something he says standing in a small lot next to a bunk of corn does not promote. So he grows bulls out slowly, using light feed.

Clark says he is aware of the pressure on Angus breeders to stress size, but he feels there may be a limit. He wonders how a 2,400-lb. bull is going to handle himself under hard range conditions.

He likes to see his yearling bulls at 950-1,000 lb., his 2-year-olds at 1,600 lb. "Our stock bulls," he says, "must be around a ton. I like them 50% over my preferred cow weight. This seems to be a rather uniform formula throughout all nature." Of his present herd bulls, he says all are above this weight.

"Those cows at 1,150-1,300 lb. have generally proven the more useful here at Craigie-Ingleside. Actually, I firmly believe a cow's size has little or nothing to do with her profitability."

Sorts by Pedigrees

Although linebreeding has eliminated large individual differences in the herd, Clark does sort by pedigree pattern. And he says, "I have in mind an ideal cow, an ideal bull. If I like them, someone else will."

He looks for prominent, sharp, bright, intelligent eyes in his cows. He doesn't want any waste in the brisket and he wants to see a level top. Otherwise, he says, so long as they are black, they're okay.

Which brings up the subject of Hereford cows. He likes a Hereford cow, he says, because she's most susceptible to improvement when she is crossed with a black bull.

Clark leaves no doubt the Craigie-Ingleside operation is conducted strictly as a breeding proposition. There is no trading. No speculation. No public sales. No consignments. Although Clark respects performance testing, he does not use it in his herd.

Visitors Welcome

Visitors are welcome, Clark says, but by appointment only—and only Monday through Friday. Saturday and Sunday are days of rest and recreation for both Clark and his men. And because West Virginia weather can be unreliable, Clark recommends visiting between June and October.

Clark has been in the cattle business a long time. He not only knows his own cattle, he knows more than a little about the beef cattle industry. Even so, he says he gets up every morning prepared to make 17 major mistakes. But it must be worth it. He likens his feelings to a quote from the poet Coleridge, "Joy rises in me like a summer's morn."

"That," he says, "is the way I feel when I am in the company of other cattlemen and when I am in the company of my own cattle."

These are some of the Craigie-Ingleside heifer calves.

