

NORTH

Angus producers traveled by bus to view more than 70 Angus herds on display in North Dakota during the 2003 National Angus Tour.

by *Corinne Blender*

Fall was in the air in North Dakota for the 2003 National Angus Tour Sept. 25-27. Crisp temperatures greeted the more than 450 Angus breeders and beef industry professionals as the buses were loaded each morning while the sun rose over the rugged hills. Clouds painted the sky with many colors, depicting the changing seasons by displaying rays of sun, as well as a quick rain shower.

Seven tour buses traveled more than 500 miles, stretching from central North Dakota to Canada, then back to the southwestern corner of the state. Although the bus rides were long, many miles of the diverse agricultural-based state were on display.

Tour attendees traveled through "pot hole" country near the Canadian border. Its nickname is

► The 2003 National Angus Conference and Tour received media coverage by many print publications and radio and television stations. Many attendees were amazed by the number of ag TV and radio stations in that part of the country. North Dakota is truly home to rural America, with a population of only 642,200 people according to the 2000 U.S. Census. In comparison, the smallest state by land area, Rhode Island, has a population of 1,048,319.

► The alleyway at the Stockmen's Livestock Market in Dickinson was well-traveled by the more than 450 tour attendees at the 2003 National Angus Tour in North Dakota. Eleven producers from around the area displayed pens of cattle.

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earned from the many natural water holes or ponds that dot the countryside, providing a perfect resting area for Canadian geese flying south for the winter. The southwest corner of the state is home to the highest butte in the state, White Butte, which reaches 3,506 feet (ft.) above sea level.

Troy Muse said seeing scenery completely different from his farm near Hardinsburg, Ky., was his favorite part of the tour. "It's been very informative, and it's very different in the way that they have to approach their operations from how we do things," he added. "It makes me appreciate home. I'm ready to go back to warmer weather."

Seeing a lot of Angus cattle and meeting many new people were highlights of the event for Paul and Beverly Stewart, Allen, Neb. The couple also enjoyed traveling through the Black Hills of South Dakota before arriving in Mandan.

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► Angus seedstock producers and commercial Angus operations in North Dakota are part of the reason the state ranks 10th in the nation for the total number of beef cows, with 1 million head. Angus cattle representing more than 70 herds were on display.



► Tour attendees saw many classes of cattle, including yearling bulls, cow-calf pairs, weaned calves, herd sires and bred heifers.

► Pitchfork fondue, a North Dakota specialty, was served for conference and tour attendees the first evening. Steaks are skewered onto a pitchfork and dunked into a boiling vat of beef tallow. Potatoes, cooked by the same process in a wire cage, complement the meal.



SURE



► Angus breeders and commercial Angus operations sell many of their cattle through special sales at livestock markets throughout the state, like the North Dakota Angus Association Annual Bull Test Sale at the Stockmen's Livestock Market in Dickinson.



► Local ag industry representatives were tour guides for the long bus rides. Wade Moser, executive vice president of the North Dakota Stockmen's Association, provides commentary on one of the buses, sharing facts about North Dakota's grazing land, which encompasses 10 million acres, or 26% of the state.



► **Above:** Angus breeders with cattle on display provided information in the forms of brochures and flyers to help showcase their cattle. Many also offered other marketing tools such as coffee mugs and calling cards to attract tour attendees.



► **Left:** After stopping at the home ranch, tour participants listened as producers explained their operations and introduced family members and others with cattle on display. Tour attendees had just more than a half an hour to view several pens of cattle. Many of the stops were short to accommodate the more than 500 miles that were to be covered during the 2½-day tour.

► Several stops displayed bred heifers for sale. Tour attendees had the opportunity to walk through pens to evaluate the offerings.



► A quick rain shower surprised the group Friday, but the sun remained shining during most of the tour.



► **Above:** Three of the stops displayed horses as part of their ranch programs.

► **Below:** Conference and tour attendees were treated to *Certified Angus Beef*® at nearly every meal, as well as special entertainment during the evening meals. Strolling Strings, a string orchestra comprised of 12- to 18-year-old youth from the Mandan-Bismarck area, entertained the crowd with a variety of music.



► Every stop provided treats, but one of the most popular stops for treats was Farview Angus Ranch near Regent. Neighbors helped make several different bar cookies that proved to be popular with a crowd from 32 different states, Canada and Denmark.

