

by Julie Mais  
Editor



## The ‘master farmer’

*The red dirt road was rough from erosion and the remnants from when it was paved long ago. My travel companion, a local animal science student, and I traveled from the rural university campus toward a nearby village.*

I took in the mud-brick homes and the people who occupied them carrying on with their typical day — women transporting gallons of water and other goods by delicately balancing all on their heads, men working the land and others taking solace from the sun in a shady spot. Some kids we passed waved and yelled, “pu miu!” meaning “white man” as my light skin was an uncommon sight in the small country of Sierra Leone.

Our destination was the small town of Mano. Our purpose for the journey? To visit with a local man and “master farmer.”

Just off the main road, A.C. managed 50 goats. While he followed the typical extensive management system customary of the area, he provided some additional care for his small herd, including shelter for the livestock at night, in addition to keeping detailed records.

Small ruminants are raised in most villages in Sierra Leone, but the



typical herd size per household ranges from two to 10 head, with most grazing freely at their will. The West African Dwarf goats, similar to Pygmy, are

an ideal slaughter size for a family to consume in a short time, as access to refrigeration is scarce. These goats also play an important role in many local customs and traditions.

A.C. gave us a tour of his farm, starting with an old building built when Lebanese were still in the area. Each night, A.C. would round up his herd and move them into the barn-like structure, providing them with water and shelter for the evening — a fairly uncommon practice. Also rare was the fact that he identified each animal with a name and recorded

performance and any treatment.

Because of these management practices, A.C. built his herd from the gift of one goat, and was able to support his eight children in secondary school and even fund a new building for his farm.

## Leading the way

As trailblazers in the beef industry, Angus breeders have a unique opportunity to lead by example when it comes to cattle care and stockmanship. In the pages that follow, we share stories of breeders who excel in managing their herds with care according to their environment, customer needs and production goals.

Registered Angus breeders share the same heart and ambition as the “master farmer” for doing better, for “Setting the Standard” higher. Not only to provide more for the next generation, but also because it’s the right thing to do. **AJ**



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