



Robert Groom, center, spent a day visiting the American Angus Association office in St. Joseph. This young Angus breeder from Scotland is shown with Richard Spader, executive vice president, and Mark Wyble, director of Junior activities.

Coming to America

In his Stetson straw hat, cowboy boots and blue jeans, Robert Groom looks like a typical young Angus breeder.

Ask him a few questions about himself and his responses sound typical: He enjoys working with cattle . . . He wants to improve his cattle with A.I. semen from proven bulls . . . He believes his father doesn't pay him enough.

This 21-year-old cattleman, however, is far from typical. He came all the way from Scotland this past summer to visit American Angus operations and learn from our breeders.

This trip became a reality thanks to the National Junior Angus Association's student exchange work program in cooperation with the Angus Society of Scotland. In this program, young cattleman from other countries have the opportunity to come to America to work for one or more Angus breeders, with most expenses paid by donations and special funding.

Groom recorded his trip in a journal and with photos. He will make a slide presentation to the Angus Society and Scottish Association of Young Farmers after returning to Scotland.

Groom decided he would benefit most if he could visit and work at a variety of Angus operations throughout the country. From July to September, he traveled to

12 states from Virginia to California. During these three busy months, his itinerary looked like this:

July: Worked at Toby Bolson Angus Farm in Illinois. Handled and fed cattle. Worked with show cattle. Visited Illinois State Fair. Attended the National Junior Angus Show and All-American Breeders Futurity in Louisville, Ky.

August: Spent two weeks working at the Ayrshire Angus Farm in Virginia. Traveled to Salem, Ohio to visit Certified Angus Beef headquarters. Visited Select Sires Inc. in Plain City Ohio.

September: Visited American Angus Assn. headquarters in St. Joseph, Mo., and several Missouri Angus farms. Traveled west to Oregon, California and Montana to visit more Angus operations. Last stop: back to Illinois to visit the Bolsons.

"I decided to come to the U.S. now while times were changing in the Angus industry," Groom says. "I did my homework before I came and studied the AHIR and EPD programs. I've already bought some Scotch Cap semen, and I plan to buy some more A.I. semen while I'm here."

Groom has built a herd of seven registered Angus cows on his father's farm near Alyth, Scotland. Their farm is located in a county that borders the famous Angus County, where Aberdeen-Angus

cattle originated.

He plans to expand his herd in the future and develop a new market selling A.I. semen from top Angus bulls.

The Groom family bought their farm in 1985 after moving from England. They have a diversified operation, with dairy cattle, sheep, a commercial herd of Angus and Hereford cows bred to Simmental bulls, and 110 acres of barley and oats. The barley is produced both for winter supplement for the beef cows and for beer production malting. They also grow 10 acres of turnips, which is fed to their lambs and bull calves.

What are the differences between American and Scottish Angus production? Groom says there are really only a couple of major differences: The first, is American Angus are bigger framed and heavier. In Scotland, cows weigh between 850 and 1,150 pounds. The second, is how we fit show cattle. In Scotland they don't go for the fancy clipping or tail set.

He admits he did pick up a few American fads while here, like buying a Stetson straw hat. Beating out the All-American hamburger and even pizza in his favorite food category, were pecan pie and CAB steaks.

— Jeryllyn Johnson

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