

# FROM BARN PAINTING TO RURAL RELIEF

*A milestone celebration pays it forward.*

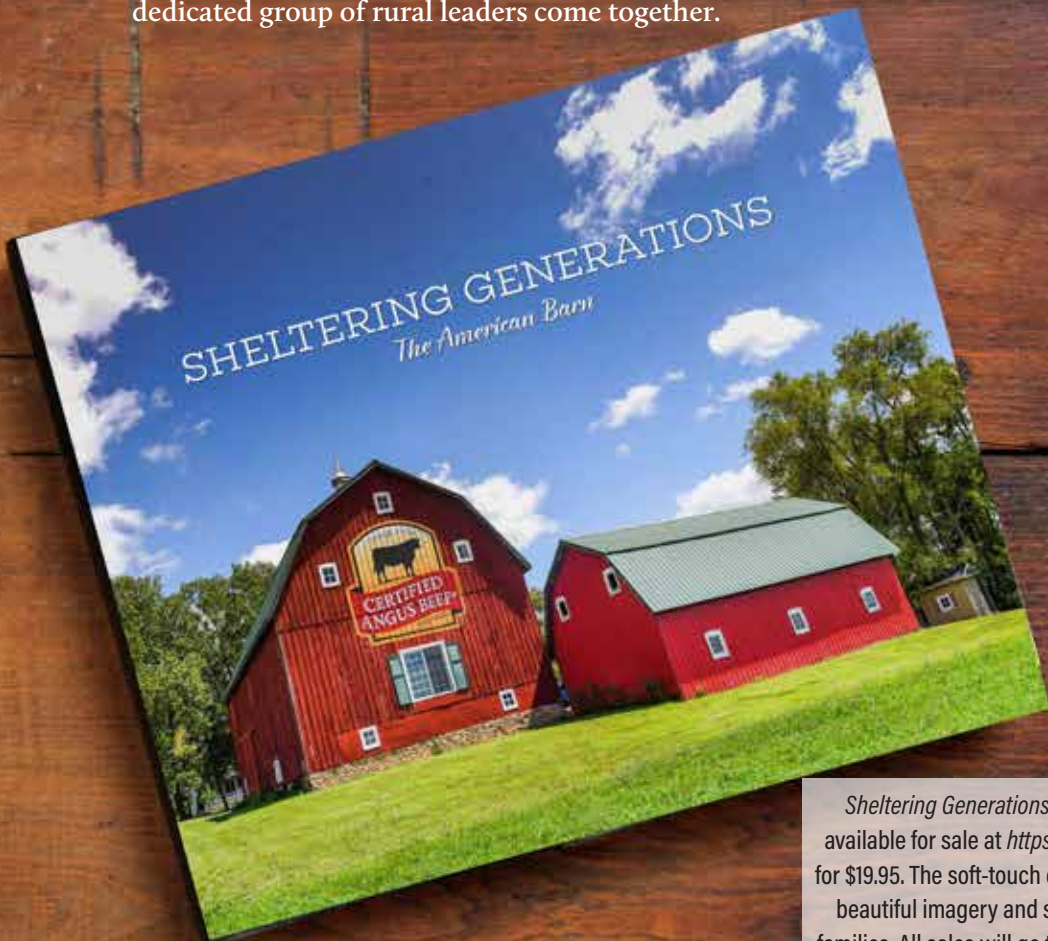
*by Nicole Lane Erceg, Certified Angus Beef LLC*

Unbridled generosity isn't uncommon in cattle country. A weekly check dropped in the offering plate, a home-cooked meal left on a hurting neighbor's porch or the quiet, anonymous donation to a local charity fund.

When disaster strikes, rural communities know how to come together to take care of their own. When rural America gets knocked off her horse, sometimes the seed of charity and strength to weather the storm comes from unexpected places.

"This began as a simple but lofty public-relations initiative," says Melissa Brewer, *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) communications director. "We just set out to paint barns."

Designed to celebrate four decades of the world's first premium beef brand, in 2018 that initiative painted 40 barns across the country with the brand logo. Started by American Angus Association members in the 1970s, it made sense for Angus breeders to be involved in the milestone, commemorating what can be accomplished when a dedicated group of rural leaders come together.



*Sheltering Generations — The American Barn* is now available for sale at <https://shop.certifiedangusbeef.com> for \$19.95. The soft-touch cover coffee-table book features beautiful imagery and silhouette stories on 40 Angus families. All sales will go toward the new CAB Rural Relief Fund, aiding ranch families during natural disasters.

“It quickly evolved into much, much more,” she says.

Each painting created space for local communities and people from diverse backgrounds to come together — celebrating beef. The casual conversations kindled new friendships and allowed time for reflection on the last 40 years in the beef business. The process unveiled incredible stories of perseverance, grief, triumph and the best parts of rural life.


Each barn had its own personality and, in turn, a unique legacy — each collectively worth documenting.

When the painting stopped, the storytelling began. Lessons of leadership, business savvy and the hard life carved from the land became *Sheltering Generations — The American Barn*, a coffee-table book featuring snapshots and stories of Angus life.

It’s a way to tell the stories of not just where each pound of CAB begins, but who the people are that raise it. The communications team hoped the book would be a centerpiece on tables, sharing stories of the barns with those who live farthest from the farm gate. Like the painting project before it, the book quickly gained a deeper significance.

Not every story farmers and ranchers tell makes folks want to pack up and move out there. Working in tandem with Mother Nature can be dangerous and frustrating. Each family featured has weathered their fair share of storms, the barn providing shelter for people and animals alike.

The sheltering notion inspired a way for rural residents and urbanites to join in helping to provide assistance when disaster strikes. For each book purchased, 100% of the sale proceeds will go toward a new brand initiative: The Rural Relief Fund. When disaster strikes cow country, the fund will allow the brand to offer aid.

“Painting barns brought the entire beef community together, from gate to plate,” Brewer says. “This is a continuation of that. Providing people who enjoy great beef a chance to lend a hand when our farmers and ranchers need it. The Rural Relief Fund is our vehicle to make sure that one storm, one tragedy isn’t the reason a generational family business has to close the barn doors forever.” 

*Editor’s note: Order Sheltering Generations — The American Barn at <https://shop.certifiedangusbeef.com>.*

