

# Cow Knowledge College Completes First Session ... 48 Graduate

by John Crouch  
Regional Manager



The graduates.

The Quail Roost Conference Center, nestled in the rolling hills near Rougemont, N.C., was site of the first session of "Canning's College of Cow Knowledge." In attendance were some 48 enthusiastic participants representing 10 states.

The program began on Thursday evening, Sept. 13, with a welcome from Dave Canning, president of Canning Land & Cattle Co., followed by opening remarks from Prof. Herman Purdy, dean of the college. Purdy stressed the importance of Angus cattle in our total agricultural economy, emphasizing that "Our only hope of being the No. 1 nation in the world is through agriculture."

In addressing the topic of why we are Angus enthusiasts, Dr. Dave Hawkins, professor of animal science at Michigan State University, pointed out that beef cattle must be a trouble-free low-labor enterprise. The beef cow must be able to produce on an annual basis and keep producing for a long period of time.

## Does It Better

Hawkins emphasized that in consideration of all the breeds of beef cattle in the world, "the Angus cow does it better." She is moderate in size, her calves are moderate in size and vigorous at birth, and her offspring can grade choice on a straight corn silage diet. He also pointed out that "The purebred breeder is the engineer for the commercial industry. If we are to remain competitive, our breeding program should never stray very far from an ideal commercial situation."

Ed Winters, manager of Ken Caryl Ranch, Littleton, Colo., regarded the selection of show cattle. "Before you can select an animal for show, you must first get him on the ground." He emphasized that an outstanding show prospect must have frame, muscling and weight. "Even though some calves appear to be modern in type, if their weight is not comparable to or better than their herd contemporaries, they will not be very competitive," Winters stated, and then related to the group how show cattle are handled at Ken Caryl Ranch.

## Goals for Breeders

"We will continue to improve Angus cattle by setting goals and working toward them," Dr. Hawkins told the group in a later session, outlining several goals worthy of consideration:

- 1, 600-lb. weaning weights for bulls.
- 2, 1,100-lb. yearling weights for bulls.
- 3, Withers height of 52 inches for cows.
- 4, 95% calf crop within 60 days.
- 5, Develop a Certified Meat Sire.
- 6, Win a bull test.
- 7, Be competitive at regional and national shows.
- 8, Develop an effective merchandising program.
- 9, Be recognized as a leading producer of foundation seed stock.

In consideration of any goals set by purebred breeders, the most important goal is live birth without assistance.



Showmanship practice with Donna McCauley, Burlington, at halter.

Murray Fretz of Webster City, Iowa, spoke on advertising and stated that the weakest link in the purebred industry is advertising and merchandizing. He suggested that advertising money be spent wisely, with a definite purpose in mind. An effective advertising program should involve a distinct logo, something that will immediately identify the breeder with his cattle.

A highlight of the conference was a stirring presentation by James "Grampa" Rolph III of Erica Valley Ranch and Tahoe Ranch, Gardnerville, Nev. "Grampa" began his presentation with a brief history about the founders of Angus cattle and related the importance they attached to the proper naming of their cattle.

"In six generations, genetic composition related to distant ancestors is diluted; however, we must always be aware that some hidden genetic fault might surface. When this occurs, we must identify the fault and have the courage to eliminate it. We cannot tolerate lethal genetic defects. In our quest to produce superior seed stock, we must satisfy the commercial cattleman or our future is bleak," he continued.

#### **Founded on Female Lines**

"The Angus breed is founded upon female lines, bulls being secondary. Believing this, the forefathers of our breed established the family naming system. Many champion show bulls have not made significant contributions to the breed simply because they were concerned with individual type and were negligent in concentrating on superior female lines."

Rolph concluded that "We must never turn away from the fundamentals of animal breeding. We cannot leave our destiny to luck or chance. Success is always the result of years of careful planning, hard work and dedicated effort."

Jim Harrington, DVM, Apex, gave an in-depth presentation on herd health—from conception to market. He stressed that cattle managed in a natural environment seldom experience problems. Dr. Harrington summed up with an explanation of the mechanics of ova transfer.

John Crouch, regional manager for the American Angus Assn., addressed the group regarding association services and programs available to the membership. Crouch also explained how to use AHIR records to improve the cow herd by eliminating subfertile and below-average producers.

#### **Effective Merchandising**

Tom Adams, former partner in Adams-Canning Sales Management Co., stated that most people who enter the cattle business and go out in a disappointed way do not learn how to effectively merchandise their cattle. Many factors affect the relationship between the buyer and the seller. Among these are herd history, show success, manner of display and condition of cattle, pedigrees, current market trends, advertisement and promotion.

"Everything one does with respect to his cattle operation has a bearing on prices received," said Adams. The breeder who is successful in merchandising his cattle quickly determines the demands of his market and fulfills them as efficiently as possible.

Care of the cow herd was the topic discussed by Lloyd Albers, manager of Canning Land & Cattle Co. Albers related many of his experiences during the past 40 years in the beef industry and concluded by saying that nothing is so important as the care and attention paid to a cow herd by the person in charge.


#### **Demonstrations**

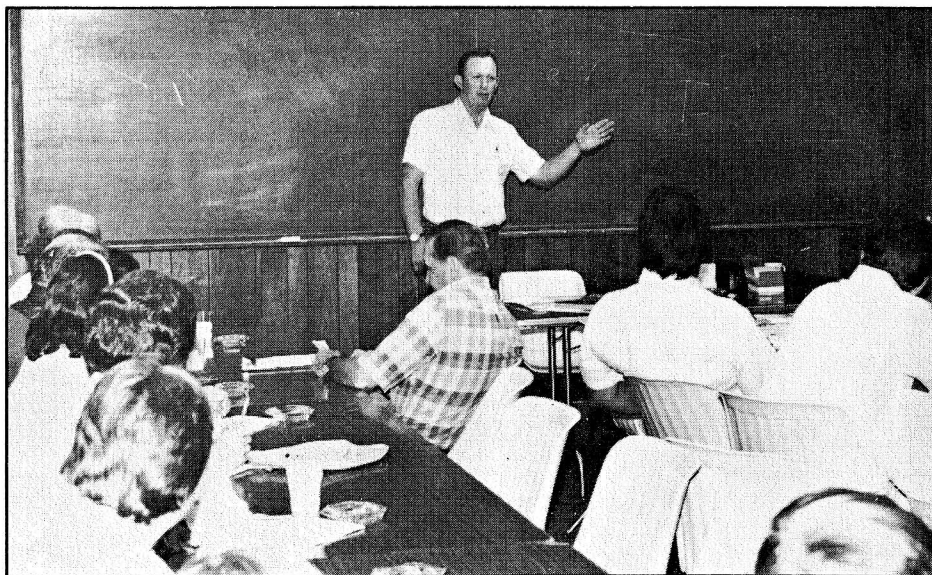
Several demonstrations at the college included tattooing, clipping, grooming, show ring procedures and foot trimming.

Col. Jim Fletcher, Butner, talked to the group about proper care and handling of livestock in transport.

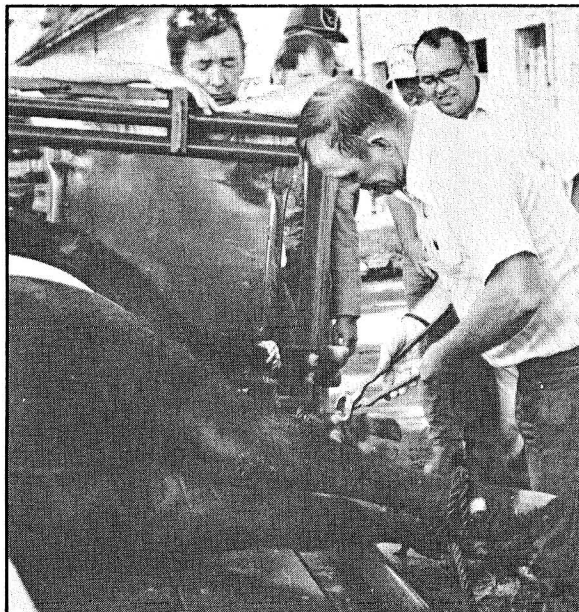
Other sessions included a class on culling cows on the basis of production records and visual appraisal conducted by Dr. Dave Hawkins and John Crouch. Prof. Purdy related to the group factors that should be considered in selecting a herd sire and used Quail Roost herd sires for the demonstration.

In summarizing the conference, Prof. Purdy told the class to take time and observe each situation. Do things when they need to be done. Problems must be recognized, confronted and solved without delay. Some people are lucky in the cattle business; however, it seems as though they are the ones who are always prepared.

The class of 1979 concluded the 3-day event by attending graduation exercises on the lawn of the Quail Roost Conference Center. Diplomas were presented following a brief address delivered by Terry Sanford, president of Duke University. 



*Ed Winters, Ken Caryl Ranch, Littleton, Colo., instructor.*



*Foot trimming demonstration.*