

CERTIFIED ANGUS BEEF



Proven Angus Genetics Important to Nebraska Feeder

Feeding calves with a known genetic background is important to Martin Ranch and Feedlot, Lamar, Neb. That's why T.J. Martin says, "The Angus sire evaluation program works right into the long-term goals of our operation."

Setting goals is a tradition for this fourth generation ranch family, including T.J., his wife Kristy and sons Tanner and Ty. T.J.'s great-grandfather homesteaded the land in 1886 and was one of the first in the area to start using his crops to feed cattle. During 1952, T.J.'s father, Ernest Martin Jr., began managing the operation. Pivot irrigation was installed on the cropland during the early 1970s, and in 1976, a 1,500-head capacity feedlot was built.

T.J.'s ambition led him to start feeding cattle when he was still in high school on land he had leased. In 1985, after college and marriage, T.J. and Kristy bought a 1,500-head capacity feedlot one mile north of his father's feedlot. Continual renovations have turned Martin Feedlot into a modern, efficient commercial feed yard.

This cattleman identifies feeding calves as a specialty and likes feeding An-

gus cattle. "Angus cattle tend to have better feed conversions, grade better, finish quicker and have good packer acceptance," says T.J.

Besides carrying Angus genetics, he wants the calves to have length, thickness and muscle expression. "I like to get them into the lot right off the cow and wean them at the lot in special, smaller pens designed especially for weaning," says T.J.

He feels his success as a feeder centers around the facilities, health program and labor. "The facilities allow the cattle to have a fairly stress free environment when being worked," says T.J.

Martin Feedlot beds pens with straw before winter storm fronts move in. "The lot's drainage system allows for the pens to dry out faster," adds Kristy.

"When we receive the calves, they are put into a small pen to get over 'the bawl' and are fed prairie hay," T.J. explains. Within a couple of days, the calves are moved to a regular sized pen where they remain until they are marketed. The ration changes slightly with prairie hay being fed and top dressed with a corn-alfalfa mixture. After the calves are accustomed to this, a medicated feed is given and they

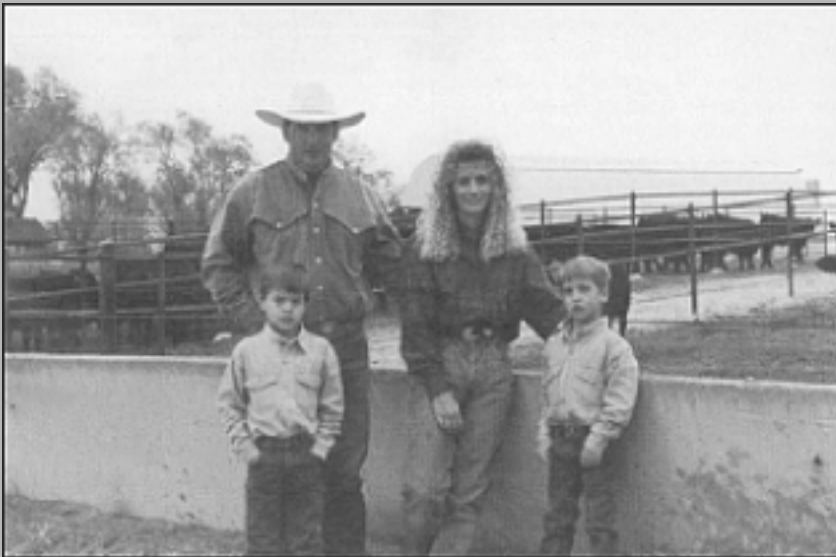
progress through ration changes.

"When the calves are big enough, they are advanced to the finishing ration within four weeks," says T.J.

All the extra care and effort Martin Feedlot employs, however, doesn't go far without communication between producers and packers. T.J. is very interested in sharing information and has been feeding cattle for the Young Farmers and Ranchers Association carcass contest for eight years.

This past year, he fed cattle enrolled in the American Angus Association's Sire Evaluation program for Dennis and Erica Voss, Horse Butte Ranch, Mont. Martin Feedlot is now feeding more than 750 Angus steers that will be evaluated for carcass merit next spring, 500 of which are owned by T.J. and Kristy. The feedlot is also cooperating with Pete Winder Jr. of Wyoming, Pat Goggins of Montana and Horse Butte Ranch to follow cattle on feed through the data collection process.

T.J. and Kristy are conscientious of the extra effort it takes to get reliable data. They individually weigh the calves and cross reference producer tags with feedlot



The Martin Family — T.J. and Kristy and their two sons, Tanner and Ty — have worked hard to build a successful cattle feeding business.



Newly received cattle at Martin Feedlot receive prairie hay and are stepped up to a hay/corn/alfalfa ration.



Performance of this pen of Angus-bred cattle at Martin Feedlot will be tracked on computer and their records and identity maintained through the packer stage.

tags to help maintain identity. In addition, Kristy provides computer printouts of individual performance data, as well as summaries of average daily gain by sire groups.

Most of Martin Feedlot is custom, however, it will partner with producers on some pens. "Whether it be through partnering on these calves or buying them, feeding calves with a known genetic background is important in today's value-based marketing system," he says.

T.J. Martin is an aggressive feeder

who knows how to care for the cattle in his feedlot. In addition, the Martin family owns a registered Angus cow herd and understands the seedstock end of the business. It's this background that inspires Martin Ranch and Feedlot to work with fellow purebred Angus producers to learn more about the type of cattle they are producing for the feedlot and consumers.

— Kelly Frank & Jenny Stickley

Sire Evaluation, Carcass EPDs Are Important Tools for Vermilion

"Carcass expected progeny differences (EPDs) with high accuracy will be the most important EPDs for the future of the beef industry," says Pat Goggins

As the owner of Vermilion Ranch, Billings, Mont., Pat believes that the American Angus Association's sire evaluation program is an important avenue for collecting carcass data on his cattle. "We use carcass EPDs and carcass data in all of our breeding decisions," he shares.

Goggins has been collecting carcass data for a number of years dating back to the Baldridge Oscar bull during the early 1980s.



Pat Goggins

He is currently testing two bulls with cooperating commercial herds. To ensure the calves identity is maintained and the data is collected, Goggins purchased the sire identified calves from one of the cooperating herds and is feeding them at T.J. Martin's feed yard. (see related story)

Vermilion Ranch is among the leaders in the Angus business. This past year, the ranch registered 1,341 head of cattle, more than any other purebred Angus operation.

As an Angus visionary, Goggins makes many observations. "Too many purebred breeders are still relying on their eye rather than factual data and EPDs. This trend needs to change," he warns.

Goggins believes too many breeders are moving away from performance genetics. "We need to be using powerful performance genetics to produce calves that weigh 600 pounds plus at weaning and put more dollars in the cowman's pocket," he says.

Moving fast gaining cattle through the feeding and processing stages at a younger age is also something Goggins sees as important, "Youth and proper genetics for carcass traits in our cattle will result in a more uniform and acceptable end product for the consumer," he adds.

Keeping the consumer top of mind and cooperating with feeders like T.J. Martin, Vermilion Ranch will continue to lead the industry in the right direction.

The American Angus Association and CAB Program are looking for sire owners who would like to collect carcass data on their herd sires as well as commercial herds interested in testing bulls for sire evaluation.

For more information, contact Larry Dorsey at (406) 763-4366 or John Crouch at (816) 233-3101.