

A Fine Pair

A husband-and-wife team is named Herdsman of the Year for the first time in the award's 30-year history.

Story & photos by **Corinne Blender**

Very seldom do you see them caught off guard. Doug and Jane Satree of Montague, Texas, have a certain "cool" about them, whether it is in the showing or behind the scenes in the barn. But Doug and Jane were pleasantly surprised when their names were called as the first couple in Angus history to win Herdsman of the Year at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver, Colo.

"It is one of those awards that you never think you are going to get. It is extremely prestigious to be selected as an Angus herdsman of the year," Doug says. "As a couple, I guess we wrote history here. It was a thrill!"

The award extends past Doug and Jane. Their daughter, Katy, plays a big role in their operation and is part of the reason they show.

"The people who are in the barns and who work with us at the shows understand that it's not just one of us that does any one part of it," Jane says. "I always tell people our family is like a three-legged stool. We don't function very well unless all three legs are pitching in — Doug, Katy and I."

Together, the team may look cool and calm, but Doug says that may not always be

true. "You might want to hang around for a little while. It may not show it on the outside, but on the inside ..." He admits things can get a little tense now and then. But the family agrees that doing the work together and counting on each other adds a sense of security.

The Satrees do rely on help when they bring a big show string to events, and they appreciate the assistance that they receive.

"It works a lot better if you have organization and maturity in your help," Jane says. "It is a lot easier to get your boat going if everybody is rowing in the same direction, and it is a lot easier to know what direction to take if you have a common objective."

"The people who sign up to work for us know how seriously we take this. If you planned on coming because you wanted to



► Showing Angus is a family event for the Satrees of Montague, Texas. Pictured from left, Doug, Katy and Jane spend many hours on the road and in the barn at home together.



► Doug and Jane were taken by surprise when they were named as a couple to win the Herdsman of the Year Award at the 2003 National Western Stock Show. They are the first couple in Angus history to have won the award.



► Respect from peers and camaraderie in the barns is a big part of showing. Doug and Jane exemplify that and were recognized by fellow herdsmen for this reason.

go to the show, you picked the wrong crew to hook up with, because you'll find out in a big hurry that won't be part of the equation," she continues, laughing.

The Satee family has seen both the winning and the losing side of competition, but they collected a lot of purple ribbons at the 2003 NWSS.

"We are very committed to each other and to our family and to Angus. We had a very good Denver this year," Jane says. "But the same people who voted for us have seen us come to Denver and to other shows where the results weren't as good. People have seen the same level of dedication regardless of how successful we were or weren't in showing. They've always seen our efforts to improve and to stick with it, and the commitment."

A family's foundation

The foundation of the Satee herd came from G Bar H Cattle Co. of Veteran, Wyo. Today, the Satees have 22 cows, but that number continues to grow, Doug says.

"We like to buy from them because we know exactly what we get," says Jane, speaking of Bill Haas and Pat Herring of G Bar H Cattle Co. "We know that the cows will milk. We will have calving ease. We know the foundation of the genetics, and they are fertile. They probably cull harder on a cow herd than most people do, so we never have to worry."

Doug and Jane say they do raise Angus for the showing. But, Jane adds, "The showing thing is great, but the functionality is what being in the Angus business is really about."

Phenotype is only part of their selection criteria, Doug points out. "You still have to have those functional females come in and reproduce, and those bulls have got to have the performance to them to make something. The females have got to be functional, reproductively and structurally sound, and then have something to them. That's what our cow herd is."

Doug has a good eye for cattle. He judges many state fairs and national shows. While he was at the NWSS he judged the Limousin show.

The family's future goal is to continue selling more progeny, which ultimately will help Katy in her future endeavors.



► Doug judges several shows each year and is gone many days during the summer, but he can rest easy knowing that Jane and Katy are at home taking care of things. Doug judged the Limousin show at the 2003 NWSS while Katy was showing in the junior Angus show.



► Doug, Jane and Katy all take responsibility for showing, fitting and doing chores at home. It is truly a family operation.



► Doug and the family do a lot of the fitting and showing work themselves. But they say they do have some good help that they rely on when they bring a large show string.



► Doug (left) and Jane Satee were recognized as Herdsman of the Year Jan. 13 at the 2003 National Western Stock Show Annual Angus Herdsman's Banquet. Presenting the award is James Fisher, American Angus Association director of activities and junior activities.

"I very much supported our getting into the Angus business because I wanted something for our family to do together, and I wanted to involve my daughter in the best junior program in the nation," Jane says. "My objective is a little more narrowly focused in regards to the future, which is to make the most of Katy's junior career."

Even though the family dedicates a majority of their time to their Angus cattle, they do like to have a little fun.

"We like to go to the Texas Rangers baseball games in the summertime. That's a big deal for us to get to go to town," Doug says, adding that it may be the only time the family makes it off the ranch together during the summer.

By the time our conversation was

wrapping up, you could tell just what this award meant to the family. It was difficult not to get choked up as Doug and Jane reiterated their appreciation.

"It really was an honor," Jane says, fighting back tears. "We can't thank enough those folks in the barn who voted for us."

