

Growing the Seed

David and Mary Ann McMahon of Belle Point Ranch, Lavaca, Ark., see the *Vision of Value: Campaign for Angus* as a starting point that will lead to more great things for the Angus breed.

by Katie Allen

In the heart of harvest, many farmers are now seeing firsthand the fruits of their labor over the past few months. The little seeds those farmers put into the ground have grown many times over, and even after leaving the farm, what those seeds have done will continue to provide life in the form of food, fiber and fuel to many.

The concept of the seed growing and providing for many is something David McMahon Sr. has used time and again. In 1956, David and Mary Ann McMahon started their Angus herd in Fort Smith, Ark. After launching Belle Point Ranch in nearby Lavaca in 1975, the McMahon family developed a profitable Angus business on the national level in just a few years. They hosted their first production sale in 1978 and have had one annually since.

The growth and improvement of the ranch over time has made the McMahon



► David and Mary Ann McMahon of Belle Point Ranch, Lavaca, Ark., have sown seeds of generosity and leadership within their own family and the breed.

name well-known for producing quality cattle, but it's the generosity and leadership of the family members that have made the McMahon name also known for supporting Angus youth, the seeds of the breed and the agricultural industry's future.

David has served as a co-chair of the

Leadership Cabinet for the *Vision of Value: Campaign for Angus*, which aims to raise \$11 million for education, youth and research by Dec. 31, 2011. An avid supporter of the Angus Foundation, David has helped plan many of the fundraising events and activities for the campaign. He says the Leadership Cabinet, along with Angus Foundation President Milford Jenkins and staff, have planted the seed that Angus enthusiasts must nurture to grow into more opportunities to raise money for the breed's future.

"The biggest achievement (of the campaign) is we got started," David says. "The framework is there to grow on, and we will."

Passion for the industry and helping others

Whether growing the family business or raising money for the Angus Foundation, David hasn't been alone in his efforts. At his side at Angus Foundation events is the smiling Mary Ann, his wife of 58 years. This year both David and Mary Ann reached significant milestones when they celebrated their 80th birthdays.

On the farm near Fort Smith, David and Mary Ann raised five children — Mary Lynn, David Jr., Kathleen, Julie and Susan.



► Milford Jenkins recognizes Mary Ann and David McMahon for their contributions to the Angus Foundation during the 2009 Angus Foundation Donor Recognition Event in Louisville, Ky.



► The Dave McMahon family of Belle Point Ranch, Lavaca, Ark., purchased this one-of-a-kind rifle at the 2005 Angus Foundation Supporter Recognition Event in Louisville, Ky.



► Nick Pohlman of Prairie Grove, Ark., hugs Mary Ann McMahon after she awarded him an Angus Star.

The McMahon family had been involved in Angus activities well before the inception of both the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) and Angus Foundation more than 30 years ago. Angus Foundation President Milford Jenkins says few people have been more supportive of Angus youth than David and Mary Ann McMahon and their family.

“The McMahons recognized early on the immeasurable value the Angus Foundation brings to the Angus breed and crucial role it serves in helping Angus youth,” he says. “Their family’s enthusiasm for the Angus breed and unparalleled passion for helping Angus youth has inspired many other Angus breeders over the years to give financially to the Angus Foundation.”

Angus cattle are indeed a passion of the McMahon family. The passion has passed down to their children and 11 grandchildren, who all have a hand in helping out at Belle Point Ranch, especially during the annual production sale.

Raising Angus cattle and being involved

in the Angus business has been good to the McMahon family. Mary Ann says she and David saw the genuine goodness in Angus people early on when developing their business, because there was always someone there to help if they ever needed it.

“Angus friends are different,” Mary Ann explains. “They’re really true friends.”

In the same way others have helped them, they, too, recognize the importance of giving back. Not only is the entire family involved with the ranch, they are also actively involved in fundraising events and programs that in turn provide opportunities for others in the industry.



Just one example among many is the “Angus Star” program, which Mary Ann started in 2007 at the National Junior Angus Show in Tulsa, Okla. She wanted to recognize juniors for simply doing their best, rather than whether or not they had won something. Juniors receive gold “Angus Star” badges for their hard work and individual effort in the barn, the contests, the showing and in leadership. To date, more than 400 Angus youth from across the nation have been named “Angus Stars,” and many juniors have said that simply knowing their effort was noticed was rewarding in itself.

In addition to their very generous financial support to *Vision of Value: Campaign for Angus*, the McMahons and their family have selflessly given countless hours of time and service as volunteers at several major fundraising events, with the most recent being BlackOnTrack! Angus Magic at Churchill Downs, which generated

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The Leadership Cabinet

The *Vision of Value: Campaign for Angus* is led by the Leadership Cabinet chaired by Howard Hillman of Bon-View Farms, South Dakota, and co-chaired by Jim Coleman of Vintage Angus Ranch, California, and David McMahon of Belle Point Ranch, Arkansas. Other members of the campaign leadership cabinet include: Dick Beck, Three Trees Ranch, Georgia; Mark Gardiner, Gardiner Angus Ranch, Kansas; John Morgan, Morgan Angus, Georgia; Abbie Nelson, Five Star Land & Livestock, California; Bob Norton, BioZyme Inc., Missouri; Blanford Pierce, Woodlawn Farms, Illinois; Anne Patton Schubert, Kentucky, representing the American

Angus Auxiliary; Ron Simek, Canyon Creek Angus, Wyoming; Eddie Sydenstricker, Sydenstricker Genetics, Missouri; Jake Tiedeman, Nebraska, former chairman of the NJAA Board of Directors; Bob Weaver, Weaver Angus Farm, Illinois; and Laurie Widdowson, SandPoint Cattle Co., Nebraska. Ex-officio members include Paul Hill, Champion Hill Angus, Ohio; and Robert Schlutz, Da-Es-Ro Angus Farms, Iowa.

If you would like to learn more about the Angus Foundation or contribute to the *Vision of Value: Campaign for Angus*, log on to www.angusfoundation.org.

more than \$330,000 in gross proceeds for education, youth and research.

David and Mary Ann's daughter, Julie McMahon French, Beaverton, Mich., has served as co-chair for all four of the Angus Foundation fundraising events hosted in the past seven years. In these four major fundraising events, which took place in 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2010, nearly \$1 million was raised for the Angus Foundation from donors of all giving levels. French offers that it is her parents' example that instilled in her not only her desire to give back, but also to find ways to help others get involved and be part of the team.

"The events have extended the outreach of the Foundation by leaps and bounds," French says. "From the first event at Summitcrest in 2004 to the last one at Churchill Downs, we expanded participation each year with new donors of auction items, new buyers and new attendees. We used the unique venues and themes to tell the Angus Foundation's story in an effective, memorable way."

It helps that the fundraising events have been fun, too. "Like a lot of other people, my mom and dad truly believe in supporting the Angus Foundation, and they like to have fun," French says. "The events our committee has produced have offered them the opportunity to do both. I guess that's how we raised almost a million dollars."

Jenkins says the McMahon family sets a great example for volunteerism and dedication toward a good cause.



► Dave and Mary Ann hit the floor to dance at "That Old West Magic," the Angus Foundation's 2004 fundraising event in Oklahoma City.

"Simply stated, the Angus Foundation would not be where it is today without the longtime support and devotion to its progress by David and Mary Ann and their wonderful family," Jenkins says.

Many of David and Mary Ann's children and grandchildren have also taken advantage of the many programs and opportunities, such as Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD), that the Angus Foundation financially supports. The family members often travel together to cattle shows as well, which is something they've always done.

"With our five children, it was always go to his football or basketball game, go to her cheerleading practice, go to this Girl Scout or Cub Scout event," Mary Ann says.

"But when we're showing cattle, we're all together."

Passion for the 'Vision'

As the *Vision of Value: Campaign for Angus* nears its fruition, raising money to support various aspects of the Angus breed, from providing youth scholarships, to funding research projects, to helping individuals attend educational conferences, will never be over. In addition to supporting the Angus Foundation financially, David says it is important to get more people involved in Angus Foundation activities and to serve in leadership roles.

"Members of the American Angus Association should know the Foundation exists and needs their help," David says. "There are a lot of great programs in existence that anyone can participate and be involved in. We, the Association, must keep the Foundation on the front burner and use its resources in the proper and most useful way."

The expansion of these resources to provide more funding and opportunities for people in the Angus breed is dependent on more donors and leaders stepping up and helping grow what the campaign has already started. David and Mary Ann both see the future holding many great things for our industry if more and more people — that exhibitor who's never won a class at a show but wants to learn more about Angus cattle, that youngster who wants to go to college to pursue a career in agriculture, that student researcher who has the ambition to improve feed efficiency for cattle and help farmers in tough economic times — continue to benefit from the Angus Foundation in some way.

"We are a people business, not just a cow business," David says. "America must get better with youth and in education."

