

Helping Those Who Need It

Bob and Marillyn Schlutz are leaving a legacy of generosity in the Angus breed.

by Sarah Hill, projects editor

For Robert (Bob) and Marillyn Schlutz, Da-Es-Ro Angus Farms, Columbus Junction, Iowa, it all started with a single Angus heifer bought for a 4-H project. Today, the Schlutzes generously give back to youth in the Angus breed and their community.

The Schlutzes consider themselves to be very “community-minded”—always looking for ways to help those who need it. The Angus Foundation, Angus youth and the breed as a whole have greatly benefitted from their generosity through the years.

Building the herd

During Bob’s 4-H career, he grew his small herd from a single Angus heifer to 10 cows. After finishing school, Bob’s father, Dale, also bought 10 cows, and Da-Es-Ro Angus Farms was born. The farm’s unique name came from a combination of Bob’s parents’ names, Dale and Esther, and his own. Bob and Marillyn married in 1954.

Dale and Bob farmed 250 acres of corn and soybeans, and Bob and Marillyn went into business managing 18 KFC restaurants. The Angus herd grew.

“We just kept building from there,” says Bob.

At their peak in 2000, Da-Es-Ro Angus Farms was home to about 160 Angus cows. By 2010, the farm was hosting a sale every year. The Schlutzes focused on producing seedstock that excelled in carcass merit and expected progeny differences (EPDs).

“We wanted to produce cattle that the consumer wanted,” Bob says. “We wanted to produce something that would work on commercial herds and move the cattle business ahead.”

Showin’ and goin’

“We showed all over the country,” says Bob.

The late 1980s and early 1990s were the showing heyday for Da-Es-Ro Angus Farms. In 1987, the Schlutzes’ son, Kevin, showed a heifer that won her class at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS). That heifer was the start of his small Angus herd.

The heifer had a bull calf named “Casey.” In 1991, Casey earned junior champion bull



► Bob and Marillyn Schlutz, Da-Es-Ro Angus Farms, Columbus Junction, Iowa, are passionate about giving back to the Angus community.

honors at the NJAS. Whitestone Krebs Angus in Nebraska bought majority interest in Casey and continued showing him. A year later, Casey won grand champion bull at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver. Casey also took top honors twice at the All-American Breeders’ Futurity in Louisville, Ky.

Serving the Angus industry

Both Schlutzes have given back to the Angus industry through their time and effort over the years. Marillyn served as chairman of the Iowa Angus Auxiliary and chairman of the Ways & Means Committee for the American Angus Auxiliary. On the regional level, Bob served as president of both the Eastern Iowa Angus Association and the Southeast Iowa Angus Association. He also served on the American Angus Association Board of Directors for six years and was chairman of the Angus Foundation Board of Directors in 2008.

“It was a joy to serve on the Angus Board of Directors,” Bob says. “I think there’s been a lot of good people serve on the Board and a lot of good has been done.”

Giving to Angus

“There’s been some families and young people who haven’t been as fortunate as we have,” Bob says. “It’s always been our policy that, if we can afford it, to give back and try to help someone who really needs it.”

With that statement as their mission, the Schlutzes have donated more than \$40,000 to

the Angus Foundation over the years. These donations have had an unimaginable impact on the future of the Angus breed.

“Agriculture is always going to be here,” says Bob. “We feel it is very important to help feed the world.”

Their leadership gift in 2006 to *Vision of Value: Campaign for Angus* inspired other Angus breeders and peers to support the \$11 million fundraising initiative. The Schlutzes’ donation of \$25,000 established a scholarship endowment that will carry on their legacies. Each year, a \$1,000 scholarship is given to the owner of the champion bred-and-owned female at the NJAS. Scholarship winners have hailed from California, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan and Missouri.

“The Schlutzes truly care about Angus youth, and their generosity is evident in everything they do,” says Milford Jenkins, Angus Foundation president.

In addition to giving to the Angus Foundation, the Schlutzes have generously donated to the Iowa State Fair Blue Ribbon Foundation, including funds to install air conditioning in the show arena for the 2008 NJAS, hosted by Iowa. The Schlutzes’ philanthropy has touched countless lives in other special ways through helping to build a new day care and assisted-living facility in their community, donating funds for a new youth center at their county fairgrounds, and funding kidney research at the University of Iowa.

Scaling back

By 2013, Bob knew some changes needed to be made. He was facing health issues requiring a kidney transplant. In December of that year, Da-Es-Ro Angus Farms hosted a dispersal sale.

“We still enjoy Angus cattle,” Bob says. “They get in your blood, and I don’t know a way to get it out.”

After 33 years managing their KFC franchises, the Schlutzes sold the business to Kevin, who lives nearby. Their daughter, Lynn, lives in Des Moines with her family.

Although the Schlutzes’ journey started with a single heifer, it’s obvious that their Angus involvement has enabled them to give back more than they ever imagined.

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Editor’s Note: For more information on giving to the Angus Foundation, visit www.angusfoundation.org.

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