



Family Genetics, Customer

This family uses the talents within its own gene pool to produce the best Angus cattle it can to help customers put premium beef on the table.

Story & photos by **Nicole Lane**, Certified Angus Beef LLC

Stepping through the doors of Pat and Marilyn Herring's house near Veteran, Wyo., is like walking into a family reunion. Gathered around the kitchen island, Bill Haas, Kevin Nickel and Pat Herring compare ideas as owners of G Bar H Genetics.

Pat's sons, Boone and Crocket, stand off to the side while two young cowboys, Cade and Cord, bounce around unable to keep still. Marilyn, Pat's wife, weaves in and out making sure all are taken care of, adding in bits of conversation where she is sure the boys have left something out.

It would take drawing a family tree to explain how everyone is related, but raising quality Angus bulls is in their genes, a tradition they carry out on the land homesteaded by their ancestors in 1910.

Family working together in the seedstock business is nothing new. It's a special relationship that takes "a lot of patience," according to fifth-grader Cord.

Bill, Kevin and Pat all have separate ranches and make their own breeding and management decisions to produce registered-

Angus bulls. When it comes to marketing them, they all sell together under the name G Bar H Genetics.



► **Above:** Working together to raise quality genetics are (back row, from left) Kevin Nickel, Pat Herring, Bill Haas, (front row, from left) Cade Herring and Cord Herring. Kevin, Pat and Bill all have separate ranches and make their own breeding and management decisions to produce registered-Angus bulls. When it comes to marketing them, they all sell together under the name G Bar H Genetics.

35 Keys to Success
Herd Goals



Satisfaction

“We see cattle the same, and we like cattle the same,” says Bill.

In their own herds, each takes wider family input into consideration. They emphasize similar traits for their bulls, focusing on scrotal circumference, birth weight and carcass traits, placing importance on cattle that can perform in Wyoming’s rugged terrain.

“As far as working with family, its fun, it really is,” says Kevin. “We’ve got three operations that are similar, but not the same. And I can always drive over to Bill or Pat’s and look at the cows, and we learn from each other.”

Their passion for working with cattle has reached into the extended branches of the family tree, allowing brothers-in-law, nephews and grandchildren to join in and learn. Sharing their knowledge of breeding quality Angus bulls is a source of pride for this family.

For Pat, it has been the opportunity to share it with his grandchildren.

“One of his proudest moments was when he had all four kids out on horseback working cattle,” says Marilyn.

Exceptional customer service

For Kevin and Bill, it has been the ability to help educate their customers.

In an effort to make the best selections and



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provide the most accurate information, they use ultrasound technology. That has helped to improve muscling in their herds and really lets them see what’s under the skin.

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More than numbers, they try to provide the best experience they can for customers looking for the right bull.

“A lot of these customers can have every

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piece of information in front of them and look at you and say, 'I just want a good bull,'” says Kevin.

“That’s what we are trying to give them,” says Bill.

Besides quality bulls, the family has started offering more services, such as free delivery and boarding bulls at no cost. After the February sale, they will keep bulls for buyers until those customers need them for breeding. That can mean boarding bulls at no charge until April.

Just as they trust the whole family they raise cattle with, the G Bar H team strives to earn that same confidence and sense of relationship from and in their customer base.

“People have to like you before they will buy something from you,” says Pat.

It’s all working, based on 85%-90% of sales going to repeat customers.

Black is back

The opportunity for success with the Angus breed wasn’t always this good, Pat says, thankful for the market turnaround.

“I was in the cattle business from the time I was old enough to saddle a horse,” he says. “At that time you about had to stand on a street corner and sell Angus cattle, especially in range country.”

After working on a Hereford outfit, Pat and Marilyn moved to Veteran to help operate her family’s Angus operation. That’s when Pat switched to Angus, and he’s never gone back.

“I remember when you just about had to give away Angus bulls,” says Marilyn.

“Now they are the hot item,” Pat finishes.

He attributes that shift to promotion of the Angus breed and the commitment to genetic improvement that includes carcass merit.

Now G Bar H Genetics focuses on helping customers produce a premium Angus product.

Beyond cattle genes

Charlie Farthing of Cheyenne, Wyo., has been a customer for nearly 15 years, buying bulls from the family for his cow-calf and yearling herd.

“We like the cattle,” Farthing says.

“Not only are you buying quality cattle, but you are buying from a good cattle family. They know the cattle and are honest about them. You can tell they take a great deal of pride in what they raise. They stand



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Originally a Hereford man, Farthing tired of getting beat in the salering by black cattle, so he made the switch to Angus. He says he stayed because of the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand.

Now he focuses on using genetics that help him claim the CAB premium. Farthing has collected carcass data for several years showing G Bar H genetics have helped him earn those premiums and, most importantly to him, avoid deductions on the rail.

Even more than that, Farthing can depend on the family for help whenever he needs it. Cade, 13, and Cord, 11, often head over to his ranch to help with branding and anything else he may need. All he has to do is make the call.

Customer service at G Bar H has shown there is more to producing quality beef cattle than genetics and herd management.

“They are set for the future — they’ve got not only genetics in the bulls, but genetics in the family,” says Farthing. “I think it’s an outfit that is going to be around for a long time.”

It might be on horseback out in the pasture, around the kitchen table or at their annual bull sale. Wherever it is, this family uses the talents within its own gene pool to produce the best Angus cattle it can and help its customers bring premium beef to the table.



Editor’s Note: Nicole Lane is an industry information intern for Certified Angus Beef LLC.



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