

# A Natural Ambassador

The 2012 Miss American Angus explains what it means to be Angus royalty.

by *Carrie Gilliam, American Angus Association*

**W**hile competing for the title of Miss American Angus, Brooke Harward of Richfield, N.C., was asked to tell the judges a little about herself. In her response, Harward described her family, their cattle operation and how they have shaped her into the person she is today. She also shared her passion to make an impact on the industry that has given her so much.

The judges decided to give her that chance when they crowned her the 2012 Miss American Angus Nov. 14, 2011, at the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) in Louisville, Ky.

Already a strong voice for the beef business, Harward now serves as an ambassador for the Angus breed to American Angus Association members, the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA), and — her most important audience — beef consumers across the United States.

## Getting to know Miss American Angus

A freshman at North Carolina State University (NCSU), Harward is studying agricultural business management with minors in accounting and economics.

She is the daughter of Marcus and Patricia Harward, and has five sisters: Lorie, Catherine, LeAnn, Marcie and Mattie. Together, they own and operate a show cattle business named Harward Sisters.

Harward's dad is a fifth-generation farmer, as well as the owner and operator of livestock market operations, including livestock market barns and a video auction. After graduation, Brooke plans to continue work at her family's livestock video auction market to help producers in her area market their cattle.

"The farm and cattle have been a part of our daily lives for, well, forever," Harward says.

But the same could not be said of her classmates throughout the years, as many were several generations removed from the farm. She became known as the "girl with cows" at Gray Stone Day School.

"I embrace that nickname, because people who may not have known anything about agriculture hopefully learned a little bit about its importance," Harward says.



PHOTO BY KASEY MILLER

► Miss American Angus Brooke Harward knows the title is more than just the accessories. She is ready to make her mark on the Angus breed.

She was elected class president during high school and was the National Honor Society President her senior year.

"With my involvement I was able to relate to my peers and educate them about the importance of agriculture," says Harward.

Alongside all of her school activities, Harward became more involved with the NJAA after participating in her first cattle show when she was 13 years old.

"I still remember it, I was more interested in friends and sports than showing cattle," Harward says. "But, after my first show with my heifer, Rosie, I was hooked."

She attended a Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) conference and attended her first National Junior Angus Show (NJAS). She also earned leadership roles in her state junior association and was elected president of the North Carolina Junior Angus Association.

Harward never guessed her junior Angus

involvement would lead to becoming Miss American Angus.

"It is truly a dream that I am incredibly thankful for," she says. "I first asked myself if they really said my name, then I was overcome with emotion and repeatedly told myself not to cry."

It wasn't until the next weekend, heading to a sale, that reality hit.

"Nothing can compare to how honored I felt when I put the famous red jacket and tiara on together for the first time," she says.

## Looking forward to a year of service

Harward knows the title is more than just the accessories. She is ready to make her mark on the Angus breed.

Since she grew up in the commercial side of the business, she knows the importance of the breed to several industry segments. And, she wants to reach out to consumers to educate them on how high-quality Angus beef is produced.

Miss American Angus will also assist the Association, NJAA, and the American Angus Auxiliary with shows, educational events, field days and other activities to promote the benefits of the Angus breed.

Harward will have the opportunity to influence many lives throughout her year of service as Miss American Angus. Yet, maybe none more than her sisters at home.

"After I was crowned, I think they were happier than I was. They couldn't stop smiling and chatting about how they are now princesses," Harward says. "I want to show my younger sisters that you can accomplish anything, and I hope my experience inspires them."

Harward is no longer just a big sister, or the "girl with cows." She is a role model, advocate and true inspiration for others around her. The Angus breed is fortunate to have her as an ambassador.



**Editor's Note:** Carrie Gilliam is communications coordinator for the American Angus Association.