

Angus Heritage Celebrated at Kansas Angus Field Day

Producers, descendants and area citizens gather to honor Angus visionary.

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► A gentle Kansas breeze and Indian summer day completed the field day activities. The bull that topped the monument received a fresh coat of paint this spring.

Angus producers, area citizens and distant relatives of George Grant gathered to celebrate Angus heritage during the Kansas Angus Association Field Day Sept. 27 in Victoria, Kan. The day was highlighted with featured speakers, cattle displays, youth activities and tours of the George Grant Villa.

A warm, fall day and a gentle Kansas breeze greeted nearly 200 field day attendees

who came to celebrate 135 years of Angus in the United States as well as 125 years for the American Angus Association at the Grant Cemetery in Victoria.

Area breeders, including Ficken Angus Farms, Bison; Wolf Creek Angus, Luray; Pelton Ranch, Paradise; and Lazy H Ranch Kansas and Proven Sire Services, both of Hays, displayed cattle.

The cemetery and site where the George Grant monument is located was renovated this year through a partnership between the American Angus Association and the city of Victoria. Renovations include a lighted cement walkway, benches, signage and landscape improvements.

The program began with the introduction of special guests, who included Victoria Mayor Curt Unrein; Kansas Angus Association President Gene Barrett; American Angus Association President Paul Hill; and Neil Grant, the great-grandson of George Grant's nephew who originally traveled to Victoria with George Grant. Neil Grant introduced nine of his relatives, also students of their heritage, who visit the George Grant monument annually.

Following a *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) steak lunch, featured speakers focused on the Angus breed and beef industry — the history and future. Gary Fike, Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) beef production specialist, compared the foresight of George Grant to those of today's Angus breeders — both have a vision, he said, and because of Grant's foresight to import Angus bulls, today's surveys show that 55% of producers use Angus bulls. Fike projected CAB sales would reach 638 million pounds (lb.) in

► Angus enthusiasts gathered to view the display cattle that set the background for the day's activities.



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2008 — a new record in the company’s 30-year history.

Paul Hill, American Angus Association president from Bidwell, Ohio, updated attendees on the Association and its entities and their progress and growth during its first 125 years.

“Beyond the cattle, people really migrate to Angus cattle, and we are lucky to have some of the greatest people on Earth involved in the Angus breed,” Hill said about the membership and those who use Angus genetics.

“We have to consider this spot that we are all together on today as the genesis. This was the genesis of creation for the industry we are all serving today,” said Bryce Schumann, American Angus Association chief executive officer (CEO), as he addressed the dream that George Grant had 135 years ago when he introduced the first four Angus bulls to the United States. Schumann continued by saying that seed sown by those four bulls took root and provided a strong, stable beginning for Angus breeders.

He focused on the evolution of technology — from hand-typing registration certificates to receiving the data electronically, which accounts for about 68% of the work received. Electronic storage of certificates has increased to 20%, and saves both the Association and its members money and time, as electronic storage also allows for electronic transfers.

“Today is not simply a rededication to honor George Grant as a stockman or as a visionary,” Schumann challenged. “It is also an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the Angus breed. It is nice to look back and reflect and see where we began and measure how far we have come.

“Just as George Grant could not realize the impact that four Angus bulls would have on the landscape of the beef cattle industry around the world,” he continued, “we don’t realize what we can accomplish as a group together. If we dedicate ourselves, we can have as big of an impact as George Grant did.”

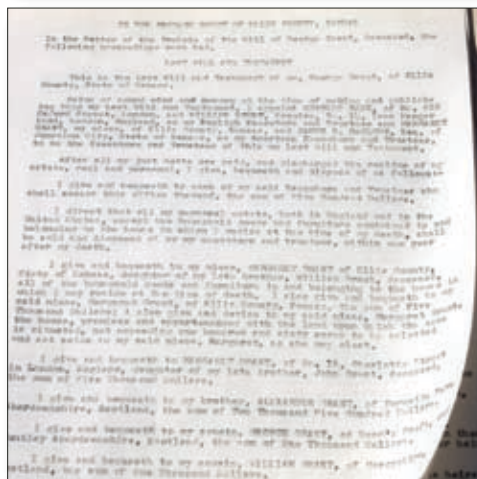
The day concluded with tours of the George Grant Villa, six miles south of Victoria. The villa has been in the possession of just two families since Grant built it — his own and the Baier family. Four generations of the Baier family have occupied the home. They take great pride in keeping its history alive.



►Left: Members of the Ellis FFA Chapter grilled 200 CAB® steaks for the noon meal.



►Below: Members of the Grant and Baier families proudly displayed a painted picture of the Grant Villa along with other mementos for all to enjoy throughout the day.



►Above: A local historian displayed the final will and testament of George Grant.



►Right: Descendants of George Grant laid a wreath on his gravesite as part of the rededication ceremony.

►Attendees gathered around the monument that was first erected in 1943. The bull was later added during the 1973 centennial celebration.



►Several media, including TV, radio and newspaper, attended the field day. American Angus Association President Paul Hill provides an interview to an area television station.



►Left: Lucy and Paul Baier invited the attendees to the George Grant Villa, where they had lived for 36 years. Their grandson and his family recently moved into the home that has been owned by only two families since it was built in 1872.



►Below: Paul Hill, Miss Kansas Angus Ashley Laas, and Victoria Mayor Curt Unrein prepared to lay wreaths at the monument as part of the celebration.



►Four wreaths representing the Kansas and American Angus associations, the city of Victoria and the George Grant family were placed to honor Grant as a visionary for importing the first Angus genetics to the U.S.



►Left: Cemetery and monument renovations include signage to give some history of the Angus breed in the U.S. and the American Angus Association. In addition, two directional signs were added in town to point visitors to the monument.



►Right: The George Grant Villa sits high on a hill that overlooks the Kansas prairie. Since the 1973 Angus centennial, a sign has indicated the owners of the villa. A portrait of Grant still hangs in the original parlor.

