

Big Sky Legacy

The *Angus Journal* visits the people and places trusted with some of eastern Montana's finest scenery and Angus genetics.

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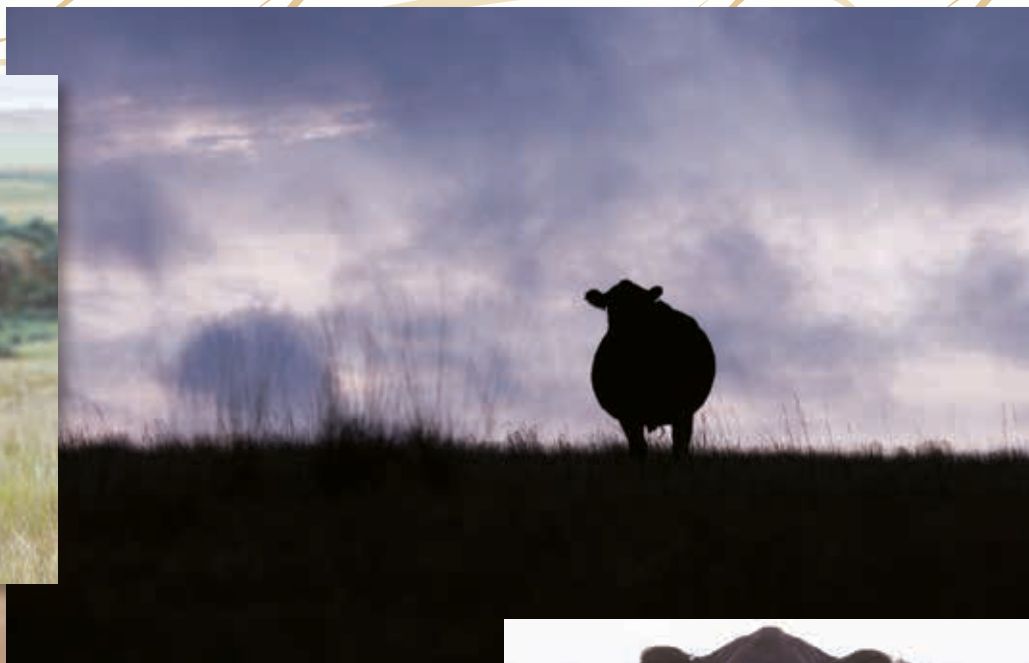
► Montana is a showcase of beautiful landscapes. While many people are drawn to Montana because of its beauty, the rancher's daily decisions help to keep the land preserved, and mostly untouched, by man. Montana is not a place with many fences or people. The state's rugged land allows for ruminants to roam the range so the land thrives and the forage rejuvenates. When thinking of the future, Chad Denowh of Gartner-Denowh Angus Ranch, Sidney, Mont., says he wants to be in Montana on his family's homestead raising Angus cattle and his children — the sixth generation on the ranch.



► This is the place where hills suddenly end and open up to a valley dotted with black cattle — valleys steeped in Angus tradition. This year marked the 40th Montana Angus Association tour showcasing Angus genetics of the area's ranching families that, in many cases, span six generations.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 314

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► Each morning is different in Montana. Even at 9 a.m., fog still drifts through the valleys. As it burns off, colors shift hues from a blue, crisp morning to an orange, dry day. Dew drips off the thousands of spider webs woven into the tall prairie grass, while the cattle continue to spread further apart searching for the best bite. Looking out over the horizon, Rick Hansen of Froid, Mont., says, “There really is no better way of life.”





►The ranchers in eastern Montana maintain a constant sense of what has been; they don't want to lose sight of tradition. After a busy day it's easy to look across the valley toward the west and feel blessed to raise Angus cattle for this way of life.



►Families spend their days together raising cattle in Big Sky Country, where Mother Nature isn't always the friendliest. Despite the hard days, young people continue to return to their homesteads because of their love for raising cattle and the way of life that provides unrivaled freedom. Dale Vitt grew up by his father's side on the Bar JV Angus ranch near Fairview, Mont. The tradition will continue with Vitt's son, Cody.



►Montana belongs to people who are double-tough, and imbued with a sense of preserving and protecting the land. Ranchers maintain water supplies for their livestock, allowing the cattle and wildlife to thrive in the hot, dry summers and cold, long winters. It's not unusual to find antelope or mule deer amidst cattle.

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