

Montana Angus Tour 2017

Tour offers three days of views, warm hospitality, great meals and cattle.

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With the lifting of the clouds, revealing the snowcapped mountains of the Bridgers, Hylite's, Spanish Peaks and Tobacco Roots that ring Montana's Gallatin Valley, 400 Angus enthusiasts representing 26 different states and three Canadian provinces were treated to a truly breathtaking backdrop as the 2017 Montana Angus Tour kicked off.

Recent storms had quelled the fear of fire that had gripped the state in which more than 1.2 million acres had burned in the past 90 days. The smoke that had been choking much of the West had dissipated. The weather for the 2017 tour was best described as "ideal."

As the morning's gray chill gave way to a partly cloudy, beautiful afternoon, folks gathered at the historic VanDyke Angus Ranch in Manhattan, Mont. On display were cattle from VanDyke Angus, Kimm Angus, Hyline Angus and Logterman Livestock. Along with viewing of the cattle, folks caught up with friends from near and far. Clint Rusk from Oklahoma State University presented a live demonstration on foot and leg structure.

As evening stretched across the Gallatin Valley, a delicious *Certified Angus Beef*[®] prime rib dinner awaited attendees at the Montana Angus Banquet. The full-capacity crowd gathered to enjoy conversation, camaraderie and some libations.

In a departure from the norm, a benefit auction was hosted for young Angus producer Andy VanDyken (26 years old) to help defray the costs of his fight with osteosarcoma (bone cancer). In a true outpouring of support, \$41,000 was donated by the people in attendance — both locals and producers from throughout the nation. A special "thank you" goes to all those who donated for this cause.

Day 2

As the sun came up, the buses were already

► **Left:** On Day 3 of the Montana Angus Tour, the third stop was at Leachman Angus in Toston, where tour-goers were treated to a CAB tri-tip lunch.

► **Right:** After lunch on Day 2, the tour headed up on the East Bench to see the cattle displayed and experience the hospitality at Reminisce Angus, Dillon.



loaded and heading to Whitehall, Mont., for the first stop on the tour, Wheeler Mountain Angus. Ron VanDyke and family, along with South Boulder Angus and Van Gelder Angus, presented samples of their popular sire groups represented in bulls and heifer pairs, along with some of their more popular herd bulls. By the time the breakfast of biscuits and gravy was finished, the temperatures had warmed and it was time to head down the road.

Stop 2 of the day was at Split Diamond Angus, also at Whitehall. Steve and Hans Bruckner and their families had Bloody Marys waiting as the six busloads of people disgorged onto the ranch. Along with heifers that would sell in the Northern International Livestock Exposition (NILE) Angus Female Sale Oct. 21, they had their weaned bulls and several pens of heifers on display. Once again, as people were just getting comfortable, it was time to "Load up!"

Traveling to the next stop involved crossing the Continental Divide twice and taking a fast trip through the town of Butte, where old mining towers still mark what was considered the "Richest Hill On Earth" in "the most populated town west of the Mississippi,"



► On Day 1 of the Montana Angus Tour, the group's first stop was the historic VanDyke Angus Ranch in Manhattan, where this bull was among the cattle available for viewing.

having around 100,000 people living there in 1900.

Turning west off of Interstate 15 and heading up the legendary Big Hole River, the caravan of buses and cars arrived at Circle

L Angus, Wise River, Mont. Cory and Kari Lamie, having had several inches of snow just days before, couldn't have asked for nicer weather in the Bitterroot Mountains. As folks sifted through sire groups of fall and spring bulls, a CAB lunch of brisket was served. Many folks just sat in awe of their surroundings. The task of herding the masses onto the buses was not easy, but eventually the wagons headed out.

Heading down the Big Hole River crossing the infamous Beaverhead River, we headed up on the East Bench towards Reminisce Angus of Dillon, Mont. Bryan and Marcia Mussard welcomed people with great cattle, "Cattle Baron" cigars and of course "Gorgeous Vodka." All are a result of the hard work, forward thinking and hospitality for which the Mussards are known, and there may have been some horse trading going on.

With the afternoon getting on so did the tour, heading back across the Beaverhead with the final stop of the day was in sight. Sitz Angus Ranch hosted the dinner stop at their bull-development facility in Dillon, Mont. Jim and Tammy Sitz and Bob Sitz and their families had a great display of sale bulls, replacement females and oh ... a great CAB prime rib dinner.

Day 3

Day 3 started near the Flathead Pass in the Bridger Mountains at Timberline Angus, homesteaded in 1882. Jake and Jane Callantine, having just overseen the wedding of their daughter Catherine four days earlier, hosted the breakfast stop that consisted of CAB breakfast burritos, a nip in the air and excellent cattle. Mimosas and Bloody Marys were served to wet the whistle. The buses

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fired up their engines, and it was time to move on.

Stop 2 was on the Brainard ranch hosted by Veltkamp Angus. Darren and Gloria had an amazing stop with great views and sire groups. A real bonus was having Ed Brainard in attendance, a long-time rancher in the Gallatin Valley.

Stop 3 was at Leachman Angus, Toston, Mont. Eric and Marlo had Thousand Hills Angus and GaLor Angus as guest herds. Visitors were treated to a great set of cattle and a CAB tri-tip lunch.

Across the Jefferson the tour stopped at Armstrong Angus. Chad and Trista had a great set of coming 2-year-old bulls to view. Their son had a handmade table that a lucky winner got to take home as a door prize.

They also had two Border Collie pups that were looking for homes; it was hard to leave them there.

The tour ventured onto Rice Ranches of Harrison, Mont. Berry and Diane live at the base of the Tobacco Root Mountains, loaded with snow. Many of the tour goers were distracted by the 150 head of elk lounging about 500 yards away. As the elk moved off, folks had an opportunity to soak in the scenery and view a sampling of their breeding program. As a mild concern, a bus was “lost” but luckily found at the Pony Bar. This is not unusual, as anyone who’s been in that area can testify.

The unfortunate end

of any great event must happen; the buses and a relatively same-sized crowd crossed the Jefferson River and settled into the last stop of the 2017 Montana Angus Tour. The road-weary crowd was greeted by Paul & Kaye Doddridge with manager Greg Strohecker of KG Angus, along with Elmose Angus and Heidi Ranch. They had a great sampling of their breeding programs. With some regret, the “last meal,” a great dinner of tri-tip, was served.

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Editor’s Note: Regional Manager Kurt Kangas covers Region 10, including Alaska, Montana and Wyoming.



► **Left & above:** After crossing the Continental Divide twice and taking a fast trip through Butte, tour-goers arrived at Circle L Angus, Wise River. Many folks just sat in awe of their surroundings.



► At VanDyke Angus, Manhattan, Mont., Kimm Angus and Logterman Livestock, also of Manhattan, and Hyline Angus, Bozeman, had cattle on display.