

NATIONAL Foster Wins Herdsman Award

Andrew Foster of Seldom Rest Farms wins Herdsman of the Year award.

Story & photo by **Kasey Miller**, associate editor

There are many aspects that make cattle successful in the showing. Genetics and pedigree play a large role, and eye appeal is a must. Condition of the cattle and presentation, plus training and fitting, are all essential. Before the cattle can make it to the showing, or even to the fairgrounds, there is a good deal of work that has to be done behind the scenes. Long before the trailer gets loaded, long hours of preparation are clocked in the barn.

Angus cattle have always been a focus of Andrew Foster's family, and Andrew is continuing that tradition. He grew up with Angus cattle in Niles, Mich., and was active in the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA). He has turned that experience into a career as partner with his uncle and father in Seldom Rest Farms. He takes care of the show barn, and his peers have noticed his efforts.

Each year at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver, Colo., herdsman from across the country select one of their own to be recognized for their efforts. This year they honored Andrew as 2013 Herdsman of the Year. He was announced as the winner before the grand champion bull

was named in the Super-point Roll of Victory (ROV) Angus Show.

"Andrew is well-deserving of this honor, as he is a hard-working young man who always has his cattle highly presented, both in the stalls and in the showing. The great thing about this award is it is selected by the winner's peers by a secret ballot," says Shelia Stannard, director of activities and events with the American Angus Association.

Young, but experienced

Andrew recognizes that he's young to win the award, but says he does have quite a bit of experience with the Angus breed.

"My family has always had Angus, and it's the breed that I grew up around and had the most involvement with. My first heifer was an Angus when I was 5 years old, and it's always been Angus," he explains.

He is no stranger to the showing, having shown at every National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) for every year of his eligibility, starting in 1996 in Kansas City, Mo. He had a

passion for showing cattle that translated after his NJAA experience.

"I had the whole junior experience," he says.

He served as the vice chairman of the NJAA Board of Directors, as well as taking on many leadership positions in the Michigan Junior Angus Association, including president for two terms, vice president and secretary. He was a director of the state junior association from the time he joined.

Additionally, he competed in numerous leadership contests at the NJAS and placed third in the National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest.

He and Seldom Rest Farms have had much success in the showing, exhibiting champions at every level of competition. Seldom Rest can often be found in the show reports published by the *Angus Journal*, and much of that success is due to Andrew.

Work behind the scenes

He studied business at Southwestern Michigan College and then transferred to Oklahoma State University (OSU) to study animal science. He stayed busy with Seldom Rest Farms' cattle operation while in school and worked for the Oklahoma State Purebred Beef Center for three years. In addition, he gained even more experience as a member of the 2008 OSU livestock judging team and the 2009 OSU meat animal evaluation team.

He graduated three years ago and came home to the farm to become a partner with his dad and uncle.

"I got to do what I always wanted to do," he says. "I wanted to come home and work on the farm."

Andrew is in charge of the show cattle, and his daily responsibilities include feeding, washing, clipping and caring for the show cattle, in addition to helping with the rest of the herd. The diversified operation includes crops, with which he helps, but cattle are his main focus. He also plays a large role in prepping the cattle for Seldom Rest Farms'

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▶"This is what I have always dreamt of doing, and I am lucky to have this opportunity," says Andrew Foster, who was named 2013 Herdsman of the Year at the National Western Stock Show.

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sale every October, in which about 20-30 show heifers are sold.

"I have a role in every aspect of our breeding program, from bull selection, mating decisions and calving, as well as show and sale calf selection and preparation. I am in charge of all advertising, as well as writing all the footnotes and preparation for our sale," he adds.

Seldom Rest Farms goes to all of the major shows, including the National Western, North American International Livestock Exhibition, the American Royal and the National Junior Angus Show. He says they also go to jackpot shows to help the juniors who have bought cattle from them. They have junior customers from the East Coast to California and everywhere in-between, so they stay busy.

Andrew recognizes there have been many who have helped him throughout the years. He says he really looks up to his dad, Scott Foster; his uncle, Bruce Foster; Dan DeMeyer; and past herdsman winners as role models. He says he is fortunate to learn from so many role models.



PHOTO COURTESY AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION

►Andrew Foster was named 2013 Herdsman of the Year before the naming of champion bull in the Super-point Roll of Victory (ROV) Angus Show. Pictured are (from left) Shelia Stannard, American Angus Association director of activities and events; Andrew Foster; and Miss American Angus Esther McCabe.

had wonderful experiences,"

Show cattle aren't always fun and games, but they are worth it in the end.

"Work at it hard. There are some long days, and sometimes it's not much fun, but we all go through this. Keep at it and be patient," he advises.

"I have a lot of great memories showing cattle, I have made many great friends and

Foster notes. "I have been fortunate to have success in the showing, as well as selling cattle and helping junior members have success also. This is what I have always dreamt of doing, and I am lucky to have this opportunity."

