

# A Sensational Sale

The National Western Angus Bull Sale brings together consignors and buyers from across the nation.

by Jena McReil, digital editor



A sale takes only minutes. Compared to the time invested in breeding, calving and caring for the next calf crop, the trip around the salering is over in an instant.

Angus breeder J.J. Reinhardt sets the scene well: “It’s unbelievable. At first when you’re waiting to go in the door, it may seem like normal, but as soon as you walk in that ring, it’s on fire.”

She’s describing the 2016 National Western Angus Bull Sale, the only one of its kind managed by the American Angus Association. Each year, during the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver, Colo., Angus breeders consign their top bulls to one of the most elite sales in the country.

Crowds poured into the Beef Palace Arena on the NWSS grounds and claimed their seats among the captivated buyers. As bulls took their turns in the ring, the auctioneer orchestrated the sale with a steady chant and echoes from ringmen along the arena.

J.J. and Craig Reinhardt traveled more than 1,000 miles from Sloughhouse, Calif., to consign their bulls in the sale. It’s a tradition they’ve had for the past five years, and an event they’d never want to miss.

“Coming here to Denver, it’s wonderful because we get to look at the different sire groups and genetics happening in the industry,” J.J. says. “I don’t care how long you’ve been doing this, you are always



PHOTOS BY JOSH COMINELLIS

► California Angus breeders Craig and J.J. Reinhardt wouldn’t miss spending their January in Denver.

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learning. We’ve listened to many people and taken some advice, tried some of our own, and we are very happy with how it’s worked out.”

## An expanded reach

The Reinhardts established Bar R Angus in northern California in the early 2000s. They both hold off-farm jobs — J.J. is a promotional marketing specialist for Jack Nadel International, and Craig owns RMP Concrete — but Angus cattle are their passion.

They credit their success in the cattle business to friends and colleagues they’ve met along the way. Neither J.J. nor Craig grew up raising livestock. They were both involved in 4-H from a young age and knew they wanted to end up in a rural area.

“After my wife and I went to our first consignment sale, that was it. We were hooked,” says Craig, who grew up in bustling Los Angeles, Calif. “We had our first Angus heifer, and here we are now, approximately 14 years later. I feel we’re very fortunate for having the ability to be here [at the NWSS], and for the bull sale especially.”

The first National Western Angus Bull Sale was hosted more than 35 years ago as a way for Angus breeders to expand their reach



► Potential buyers make their rounds in the barn before the auction begins.

# stern Stock Show

and promote quality genetics. In 2016, the sale attracted nearly 50 head from across the country — from California to Maryland, and everywhere in between.

David Gazda, American Angus Association regional manager in the southeast, has served as the official sale manager for more than a decade. His steady influence and support from across the Angus community have helped achieve outstanding sale averages in recent years. During this year's event, the sale grossed nearly \$370,000 and averaged more than \$8,000 per head.

"The group of bulls offered during the 2016 National Western Bull Sale was perhaps the most consistent set of bulls I've seen consignors bring to Denver during the time I've been associated with the event," Gazda says. "The quality ran deep in every class, with structurally correct, functional bulls that possessed the genetic capability to add value to their new owners' next calf crop."

## Best of the best

Unlike other sales, the National Western Angus Bull Sale begins in the showing. The animals are presented to a panel of judges who are charged with establishing a sale order. Mark Nikkel, Maple Hill, Kan.; Jake Tiedeman, North Platte, Neb.; and Scott Bayer, Ringle, Wis., completed this year's appraisals.

Once the show was complete and the champions were selected, the animals came back into the showing, where prospective buyers were invited to inspect the bulls firsthand. Large groups of people descended from the famous green chairs in Denver's



PHOTOS BY JENA MCRELL

► "... as soon as you walk in that ring, it's on fire," says J.J. Reinhardt.

Stadium Arena to walk around the showing and visit with consignors.

"Being in California, we're kind of an island," Craig says. "To be able to come here and have the opportunity to sell bulls to people all over has been really beneficial. Last year we sold to someone in Canada, and we've sent bulls to Idaho, Utah, Nebraska,

and it's nice to keep in touch with those folks and see how the animals are working for them."

Nebraska cattleman Glen Ross is among the crowd, and stops to visit with a number of the consignors. He attends the NWSS each year to purchase a new herd sire for his cattle operation in Gering, Neb., and comes in with a specific budget and goals in mind.

"I've purchased bulls from the Reinhardts before. They are nice people, and their bulls reflect that in their breeding," Ross says. "I like a good-framed bull with solid bone and muscle, and the genetics to perform."

Back in the barn, J.J. and Craig enjoy a laugh with Ross and catch up on how his herd is progressing.

"Repeat buyers are the ultimate compliment," J.J. said. "Seeing the return buyers come and talk to us is just amazing. It's overwhelming sometimes because we feel like we're the little guy, but the little guy shouldn't stop just because they are [small]."

Connecting good cattle and good people is truly one of the National Western's greatest rewards.



► Participating in the National Western Angus Bull Sale allows the Reinhardts to expand their reach nationwide.