

NATIONAL All Eyes on Denver

The 109th National Western Stock Show draws record attendance, competitive Angus events.

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Each January, the city of Denver, Colo., is greeted with an influx of cattle trailers.

They crowd the downtown streets and bring new life to the historic stockyards on the city's north side. The National Western Stock Show (NWSS) has arrived.

For 15 days during the stock show, Denver returns to its cowtown roots and celebrates the livestock industry's impact on the West. It's a tradition more than 100 years in the making, and one cherished by many in the Angus community.

The NWSS is a time for competition and camaraderie, and the days are filled with showing competitions, cattle sales and plenty of visiting with new and old friends. Those who attend the NWSS each year call it the Super Bowl of all stock shows — and what happens in Denver can often set the pace for the entire year.

The American Angus Association began checking in cattle on Jan. 12, and a Herdsman Social was hosted that evening for exhibitors eager to get the week's events under way. During the social, ballots were distributed to vote on the Herdsman of the Year award recipients. Chris and Sharee Sankey, Council Grove, Kan., were honored this year. Read more about their family on page 100.

When you attend the NWSS, the best way to explain where you are located is either “up on the Hill” or “down in the Yards.” On the Hill, you will find Stadium Arena and a constant stream of cattle entering the showing. Down in the Yards, you will see pen after pen of the nation's top genetics on display.

The two locations are divided by a railroad, and a swift climb up or down the Hill.



►**Above:** Even little cowgirls enjoy the famous stock-show eats during a sunny day in the Yards.

►**Right:** Saturday, Jan. 17, was the largest single day ever for the NWSS, as more than 69,000 guests entered the gates.





► Pens of cattle from ranches throughout the country fill the historic stockyards in Denver each January.

Up on the Hill

Nearly 500 entries were exhibited during Angus shows in the historic Stadium Arena, as Angus breeders and their cattle were in the spotlight Jan. 14-16.

Stadium Arena, lined with its famous green seats, was built soon after the first NWSS was hosted at the turn of the century. According to historian Dan Green, the wooden seats have an even earlier history. They were transported to Denver from Chicago, where they were part of Comiskey Park, former home of the Chicago White Sox. The bleachers traveled more than 1,000 miles to the NWSS, quite an accomplishment in the early 1900s, Green says.

The first day of Angus NWSS activities was all about the bulls. The Super-Point Roll of Victory (ROV) Angus Bull Show began

Jan. 14, judged by Dave Allan of Schulenburg, Texas, along with associate judge Mark Allan of LeMars, Iowa. They selected EXAR First Advance 5702B, owned by Schnoor Sisters, Chowchilla, Calif., as the ROV grand champion Angus bull. He is a September 2012 son of Dameron First Class. See page 92 for the full list of winners.

Following the ROV Angus Bull Show, the sale bulls entered the ring. A panel of three judges evaluated 10 classes of registered-Angus bulls, which would later be sold in the National Western Angus Bull Sale, the only sale sponsored by the American Angus Association. The 42 lots averaged \$12,038 per head. Silveira Bros., Firebaugh, Calif., consigned the grand champion bull, Silveira's First Reaction2510, who first won the senior division. The October 2012 son of Dameron First Class became the high-selling lot and was purchased by a syndicate of breeders for \$120,000. For more details, see page 116.

This year marked the 35th anniversary of auctioning the Angus Foundation Heifer Package, which has been an annual fundraiser since the Foundation was organized in 1980. The 2015 Heifer Package donated by 44 Farms in Cameron, Texas, brought a near-record \$175,000 from Charles W. Herbster of Herbster Angus in Falls City, Neb.

The evening of Jan. 14 wrapped up with an enjoyable event at Spruce Mountain Ranch, the Angus Night on the Mountain fundraiser for the Angus Foundation. The event is hosted and underwritten by ranch owners Tom and Lois Ames.

Remaining Angus events on the Hill included the Junior Angus Heifer Show and the ROV Angus Female Show. Exhibitors from throughout the nation showcased their best genetics, and the stadium was full as the grand champions were selected.

Judge Jonathan Perry, Fayetteville, Tenn., selected Top Line Lady 3330, owned by Calli Bayer, Ringle, Wis., as the grand champion female in the junior show. She is an April 2013 daughter of EXG RS First Rate S903 R3. Coverage of the junior show begins on page 106.

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The grand champion Angus female in the ROV show was EXAR Frontier Gal 3734, owned by Calli West. She is a January 2013 daughter of Dameron First Class. To find complete show coverage, go to page 92.

Down in the Yards

Before heading down the Hill, visitors are greeted with a towering sign that welcomes them to the “Stockyards.” No matter what time of day, there’s likely a crowd. There are cowboy hats and corn dogs, muddy boots and horses; sure-fire signs that the stock show is in town.

Mild temperatures, which one day reached the upper 60s, resulted in many visitors crowding into the Yards. In fact, Saturday, Jan. 17, was the largest single day ever for the NWSS. Nearly 69,000 guests entered the gates that day.

When the show officially closed on Jan. 25, officials reported that 2015 recorded the second highest overall attendance in stock-show history, with more than 680,000 visitors. That’s an increase of nearly 43,000 guests compared to the previous year and a true sign that interest in the NWSS remains high.

This spring, the National Western will continue work on a reimagined stock show complex, an effort to improve facilities and accessibility from downtown Denver. Many construction projects are a long way down the horizon, but this year starts the beginning of serious plans to update and renovate the stock-show grounds.

Down in the Yards, Angus breeders from across the country had their cattle on display. They were marketing bulls and females, promoting upcoming sales, and visiting with potential customers from across the globe.

The Angus tent was a popular meeting place throughout the week, and American Angus Association and Certified Angus Beef LLC staff members were on hand to answer questions, and supply plenty of hot coffee and friendly conversation. Genomics and DNA testing were a topic of conversation, along with other Association programs such as AngusSource®, AAA Login and much more.

The famous pen-and-carload competition rounded out the Angus breed’s week at the NWSS. Six carloads and 32 pens-of-three were exhibited in the National Western Livestock Auction Arena, while a panel of three judges ranked the entries. The grand champion carload was awarded to Mohnen Angus of Whitelake, S.D., and the grand champion pen was exhibited by Krebs Ranch, Gordon, Neb. Other winners are reported beginning on page 126.

In traditional Denver fashion, the week’s events were jam-packed and met with great enthusiasm. In the pages that follow, you will find more coverage from the NWSS, including a feature on Chestnut Angus Farm and their experience in the pen-and-carload show (see page 134).

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Editor’s Note: Dale Heikes is a freelance videographer. Carrie Heitman is the manager of Creative Media. Carrie Horsley is the director of marketing and public relations for the Angus Foundation. Lynsey Meharg was a NWSS intern and former Angus Journal intern.



► The best of the best – show results at the NWSS often set the pace for the year’s livestock events.



► Sage Krebs, Gordon, Neb., stays focused on the judge while competing in the Junior Angus Heifer Show.



► Spectators filled Stadium Arena to see which genetics make their way to the top of the class during the Angus shows in Denver.



WESTERN



► 2015 Miss American Angus Madison Butler, Vincennes, Ind., greets each exhibitor after a job well done.



► The Angus Media team provided video coverage from Denver, including a special episode of *The Angus Report* available at www.angus.org.



► David Gazda, Association regional manager, oversees the annual National Western Bull Sale, which this year averaged more than \$12,000 per head.



► **Above:** Both the cattle and their exhibitors looked their best when entering the showing in Denver.

► **Below:** The carload and pen show is a competition that is distinctly Denver.



► Angus Foundation Heifer Package three-peat buyers Charles W. and Judy Herbster of Herbster Angus Farms purchased 44 Ruby 3839, donated by 44 Farms, for an impressive \$175,000.



► The National Western Bull Sale draws consignors and customers from throughout the country. The stream of bids was strong.