

Montana Angus Tour 2015

Two and half days were packed full of Montana Angus cattle on display.

Photos & commentary by **Kurt Kangas**, American Angus Association



With fall settling into Big Sky country and the first snows falling in the Treasure State, Angus breeders from 28 states and several foreign countries descended upon Billings, Mont., for the 41st annual Montana Angus Tour. Members of the Midland Empire Angus Association were hard at work for the better part of nine months planning and orchestrating a whirlwind tour that encompassed three days in the middle of September in south-central Montana.

Events kicked-off on Tuesday morning with the annual golf tournament, which saw heated competition amongst the teams and a hole-in-one made by Larry Berg of Judith Gap, Mont.

Events then moved to the Midland Bull Test facility where registration started for the more than 270 preregistered participants. An outstanding lunch of brisket and barbecue was served to those attending. Tour emcee Roger Jacobs introduced displayed cattle by Basin Angus, Barragree Cattle, McDonnell Angus, S+L Angus, Winding River Angus and J&L Farms.

These displays provided great viewing and a chance for folks to preview many of the heifers and cows selling at the Northern International Livestock Exposition (NILE) and bulls that will sell this fall and in the spring. Judging from the clusters of people scattered throughout the facility, many people were taking the opportunity to catch up with old friends, as well as look at the cattle on display.

Hawkeye West Genex was the next stop and featured many of the popular artificial insemination (AI) sires that are currently

being used today in the registered and commercial industries.

The evening's activities concluded with the prime-rib dinner sponsored by the Midland Empire and Montana Angus associations. With 400 people enjoying the dinner in a packed dining area, laughter and smiles abounded as people enjoyed conversation, great food and drink.

Day 1

Strong coffee, coolers and decks of cards accompanied many as they carefully chose buses at 5:50 a.m., with a slight drizzle falling and a chill in the air. Departing at 6 a.m. sharp, the caravan of six buses and more than 20 cars headed toward the day's stops.

Arriving at Inderland Angus, Big Timber, at the base of the majestic Crazy Mountains, Roger and Betsy had a great set of cows and bulls on display, many of which will sell in their sale in December, and breakfast burritos ready for 330 ravenous people. Clouds hung

low and covered the view of the mountains, which was unfortunate.

The buses then headed down the trail to FairView Angus, Melville. Kenny and Rachel Lee greeted the ever-growing crowd of tour-goers on behalf of owners George and Judy Frank. As introductions were made, many had already ventured out to look at the bulls on display that will sell in their annual sale in February.

With the morning giving way to noon, the next stop was the lunch stop at Green Mountain Angus, Ryegate. Tim and Kris Todd had a display featuring sire groups of bulls and heifers that would sell in their November sale. Lunch was served to around 450 people as the tour attendance continued to snowball.

The afternoon stops progressed quickly with stops at Harmon Angus hosted by Steve and JoAnn Harmon. They showcased cows that thrive in their environment and bulls that will sell in their sale in December.

► Inderland Angus, Big Timber, Mont.



A quick trip down the road found the tour at Currant Creek Angus in Roundup. Gary and Phyllis Eliasson greeted the crowd and displayed a bull that would be selling in their sale in February.

Just south of Roundup, the next stop was at Frosty Creek Angus with owners Terry and LaVonne Frost, along with A Bar Angus owners Duane & Julie Wacker. They had an excellent display of heifers, cows and bulls that sell in their sale in Columbus in December. They also provided appetizers that were enjoyed by all.

As the sun fought to finally poke through the clouds on an amazing Montana evening, the buses and caravan of cars finally rolled over the hill to the final stop of the day at Vermilion Ranch, Billings. Pat and Babe Goggins and family were geared to receive the tour that had grown to more than 500 people.

Joe Goggins welcomed the crowd and Pat Goggins closed out the introductions with a brief speech the crowd enjoyed. As the sun set in Big Sky country, the crowd looked at cattle that would be selling in their sales in November and March.

The winner of the day's grand prize — tickets to the Denver Broncos vs. Kansas City Chiefs game, including hotel, which was sponsored by Tim and Kris Todd of Green Mountain Angus — was Deena Clark of Etna, Wyo.

► Vermilion Angus, Billings, Mont.



As darkness descended, most could be found inside the calving barn eating a great dinner of *Certified Angus Beef*® brand (CAB®) strip steaks. After traveling 277 miles in 14 hours, the tour returned to the host hotel, the crowd a little worn down, but talking about the great day.

Day 2

Armed with an extra hour of sleep, the group departed on the final day of the tour at 7 a.m. Leaving the hotel, the line of buses and cars looked like a high school homecoming rally serpentine as the tour wound its

way toward Mydland Angus, Joliet. The snow-covered Beartooth Mountains served as the backdrop for the morning's stops.

Danny and Corie Mydland had breakfast going for the 300 participants and Bloody Marys were being served after the brief introduction. Cattle on display were representative of

what the Mydlands will sell private treaty in the spring.

Moving up Rock Creek, the next stop was Harrison Angus, Joliet, where Jason and Annette and Doug and Gladys Harrison had a great display of cattle where cows mingled with the crowd freely as if they were participants, not the attraction. Also on display were bulls that the Harrisons will sell at the Midland Bull Test in April.

Heading down river, the next stop was World West Sire Services, Joliet. Scott and Andrea Spickard and crew quickly distributed boot covers as Scott made

the introductions. Participants had the opportunity to see sires such as Black Granite and Big Sky. As lunchtime came, the tour found its way to ORlgen Breeder to Breeder Genetic Services in Huntley. As the buses stopped, Jared Murnin gave a brief speech as trailers left with people headed out to see the bulls.

Lunch was served to 350 guests. Time was short as there were many bulls from some of the top programs in the United States on display. As the afternoon progressed, the tour moved east to Hardin and Reisig Angus. Here David, Dustin and Scott Reisig, along with Sioux Pass Angus, Lodge Grass, Carter Miklovich; and Pass Creek Angus, Wyola, Darrell and Ginny Rathkamp all had cattle on display representing what will sell in their individual sales in March and April. Also some of the best homemade ice cream was served.

Heading down the famous Big Horn River, the tour concluded at Pine Coulee Angus, Hardin. Jim Stampfel made the introductions and the crowd went through the cows that will sell in October and the bulls that will sell in March. The grand prize of an all-expense-paid trip to the National Angus Convention, sponsored by Zoetis, was won by Bob Smith of Sand Rock Angus, Broadus.

Monetary donations for hosting the tour were contributed by 42 people or companies and many, many more donated time. To all those who helped to make this year's tour a success a big *thank you!*

Mark your calendars for Sept. 20-22, 2016, for when the Central Montana Angus Association will host the tour in the beautiful Judith Basin.



Editor's Note: Regional Manager Kurt Kangas covers Region 10, including the states of Alaska, Montana & Wyoming.

► Currant Creek Angus, Roundup, Mont.

