

A Texas-Sized Challenge

Texas Challenge II event helps Angus Foundation campaign reach \$4.5-million mark.

Story & photos by Kelli Armbruster

A night of fun, food and fellowship welcomed Angus breeders from Texas and elsewhere to scenic Camp Cooley Ranch in Franklin, Texas, for The Texas Challenge II on April 26. This “kick-off” event for the second phase of The Texas Challenge was hosted by Klaus and Bonnie Birkel of Camp Cooley Ranch to raise funds to support Angus education, youth and research efforts through the Angus Foundation.

Event guests enjoyed delicious *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) steaks, professionally cut by Freedman Meats Inc., Houston, Texas. Also featured was Gene Caddell’s famous chuck wagon beans and entertainment by three-time Grammy nominee Dave Alexander.

In January 2007, the Birkels pledged \$250,000 toward the Angus Foundation’s ambitious Vision of Value: Campaign for Angus goal to raise \$11 million by Dec. 31, 2011, if Texas Angus breeders and the Texas Angus Association raised \$250,000 in matching funds at \$50,000 per year for the next five years.

“I feel that this year’s event only re-energized Texas Angus breeders to continue giving,” says Milford Jenkins, Angus Foundation president. “Klaus and Bonnie Birkel are an inspiration to other breeders’ philanthropic spirit[s], and we can’t thank them enough for again underwriting and hosting an event of this magnitude on our behalf.”

After the overwhelming success of the 2007 event, the goal was increased to \$1 million, with Texas Angus breeders challenged to raise another \$500,000. By hosting The Texas Challenge II, the Birkels showed their dedication and commitment to furthering the success of the Angus breed. More than \$65,000 was raised toward the new goal.

As Klaus has previously stated, “I am devoted to this because I believe it is essential that we provide the next generation of young cattle raisers with the knowledge and skills essential to stay competitive and to make a business out of raising cattle. Additionally, there are still many open questions that research can answer about how to manage and raise cattle in a better way. Education and research must be continual and focused toward our industry’s special challenges.

Bright young individuals must be encouraged to stay in this business and must see what is possible.”

“It was wonderful to see so many Texas Angus breeders and our friends from allied industry come out in support of such a good cause,” said Rocky Bunting, Texas Angus Association president. “Not only did we have breeders add to their initial pledge, we had several new donors step up and make a difference by giving a gift for the first time. We even had several donors from outside the state of Texas, which tells me the work the Angus Foundation is doing reaches everyone.”

With the ultimate fundraising goal of \$1 million by Dec. 31, 2011, The Texas Challenge allows donors the freedom to designate how their gift will be used by the Angus Foundation, with choices including educational programs, youth activities and/or bovine-related

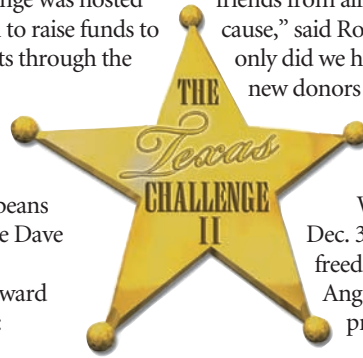
research. As a part of this fundraising initiative, a Texas Angus Association Scholarship Endowment Fund has been created to enable donors to support the next generation of Angus breeders with educational scholarships awarded to Angus youth from Texas through the Angus Foundation.

“As a college student and a longtime member of the Texas Junior Angus Association, it means the world to me to have the

support of the Angus Foundation and Texas Angus breeders. From leadership conferences and scholarships to making friends across the country that show Angus cattle, I’ve benefited immensely from this breed,” said Jennifer Ann Smith, Texas Junior Angus Association president.

All funds raised through The Texas Challenge II will count toward achievement of the nationwide fundraising initiative Vision of Value: Campaign for Angus, which aims to raise \$11 million by Dec. 31, 2011, to further support the Angus Foundation’s education, youth and research efforts. To date, more than \$4.5 million has been dedicated to the campaign through cash gifts, pledges and planned giving commitments.

The Angus Foundation is the not-for-profit affiliate of the American Angus Association that funds and supports programs involving education, youth and research.



►Several ranches were honored for their contributions to the Angus Foundation’s Vision of Value Campaign. James Burks of 44 Farms, Houston, Texas, accepts the award for Mike and Florence Rutherford, Buda, Texas.



►Bill and Shirley Clark, Clark Angus Ranch, Houston, Texas, enjoy the evening’s entertainment. An out-of-state donor paid tribute to the Clarks by making a \$10,000 gift to the Angus Foundation in their name.