

# TC Ranch Named Top Seedstock Producer

Nebraska Angus operation recognized for performance leadership.



► Don Mackenzie (left), BIF CBBC planning committee chairman, and Lora Rose (right), 2007-2008 BIF president, present Connie and Vance Uden of TC Ranch, Franklin, Neb., the 2008 BIF Seedstock Producer of the Year Award.

The Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) honored TC Ranch with its Seedstock Producer of the Year Award July 3 during the group's annual meeting in Calgary. TC Ranch, located in the Republican Valley of south-central Nebraska, is owned and managed by Vance and Connie Uden and son Dru.

Considered one of the most progressive beef cattle seedstock operations in the United States, TC Ranch is a family purebred Angus operation that has been in business for 58 years. The ranch is home to 700 registered Angus cows and 8,000 acres of native grass and irrigated farmland devoted to corn, soybeans, alfalfa and hay. TC Ranch-bred sires are recognized as Angus performance and carcass leaders.



The herd has documented performance records since 1958, first with the Nebraska Extension Service and then with Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®). The Udens use a complete, multi-trait selection program that results in top balanced genetics for fertility, function, performance and carcass traits in bulls and females.

Vance and Dru are widely respected for their knowledge of pedigree, performance and live evaluation. The use of TC genetics worldwide is proof that the Udens' commitment "to produce cattle that will help the commercial cattle industry make a return" is recognized and valued. Their efforts have led to TC Ranch sires being recognized in the top 10 for progeny registrations for all Angus cattle for the past 15 years.

TC Ranch uses the Angus Information Management Software (AIMS) program on a daily basis to track breeding, calving, weight performance, carcass, ultrasound and sales information. The information is exchanged with and enhanced through the American Angus Association – providing a rich database to support development of breeding decisions, sale books and customer service information. Performance records from the cow herd, replacement heifers, bulls and steer progeny are fundamental to their genetic selection process. Data from different beef production segments are blended to provide the solid genetic foundation for TC Ranch to create the next generation of cattle.

TC Ranch was nominated for the Seedstock Producer of the Year Award by the Nebraska Cattlemen. For more information, visit [www.tcranch.com](http://www.tcranch.com).

## 2008 Seedstock Producer Award Nominees

### Andras Stock Farm

Owners: *Steve and Theresa Andras, Will and Kim Andras, Manchester, Ill.*

Andras Stock Farm is located near Manchester in west-central Illinois. The operation was established in the 1830s in an area commonly known as "Burnt Haystacks Springs." John Cennick Andras helped incorporate the town in 1837 and renamed it after his hometown of Manchester, England.

The Andras family raised commercial Shorthorns throughout most of the 19th century. Beginning in 1898, they created a progressive Hereford seedstock herd marketed under the "Daylesford Farms" name. More than 100 years later, the Hereford cows are still present. But since the mid-1980s, the vast majority of the Andras cow herd has been composed of Red Angus genetics.

Steve and Will Andras represent the fifth and sixth generations, respectively, of the Andras family in Manchester. Andras Stock Farm is a father-son operation, with Steve and Will as the sole source of management and labor for nearly every facet of day-to-day activity. The operation consists of approximately 200-225 cows, of which



approximately 130 are grazed near Manchester. The balance is cared for by two cooperators, one of which is in Texas. The arrangement provides the Andras family with heat-adapted cattle and test sites for outcross genetics. They often test proven black Angus artificial insemination (AI) sires to expand their Red Angus gene pool.

Cattle are marketed through two annual production sales. The Andras Kind Red Angus Female Sale is the first Saturday in November, and The Andras Kind Bull Sale is the first Saturday in April. The focus is to fill the needs of commercial cow-calf producers. Andras Stock Farm works to provide practical, functional cattle able to adapt to differing environments and produce profits for their owners.

Andras Stock Farm was nominated by the University of Illinois Extension and Illinois Beef Association.

## Colorado



### Croissant Red Angus

**Owners:** *Larry and Jean Croissant, Kevin and Sallie Miller, Briggsdale, Colo.*

Croissant Red Angus is a family partnership located in the high, arid, short-grass plains of northeastern Colorado. The family

has deep roots in production agriculture as a business and a lifestyle. The operation consists of approximately 250 Red Angus females. The Croissants have been breeding Red Angus cattle since 1982. They purchased and moved to the Briggsdale Ranch 12 years ago to focus on producing Red Angus seedstock. Kevin and Sallie Miller joined the operation in 2005.

Beginning in late February each year, 70% of the cows calve within 21 days. Yearling bulls and open heifers are developed on the ranch to be sold at the annual spring production sale or are used as replacements in the herd. About 250 calves from the ranch and from Croissant Red Angus genetics are finished at the ranch's feedyard, which allows for collection of animal performance and carcass data.

Through the system, the Croissants strive to produce the best Red Angus seedstock possible in a commercial production environment using proven AI sires. Cattle are managed in large contemporary groups to enhance the performance data collected from birth to harvest.

Using balanced trait selection, Croissant Red Angus strives to make steady genetic progress. A complementary mating system is carefully followed to avoid generational stacking of extreme traits. Discipline within the breeding program's standards reflects the seriousness taken in data and performance traits utilized. Croissant Red Angus believes customer satisfaction is embodied in delivering the product that is expected by their customers.

Croissant Red Angus was nominated by the Red Angus Association of America.

## Kansas



### Harms Plainview Ranch

**Owners:** *Mark and Kim Harms, Lincolnville, Kan.*

With no family background in the seedstock industry, Harms Plainview Ranch (HPR) started from scratch in the early 1990s as the dream of two Kansas State



PHOTO COURTESY KANSAS LIVESTOCK ASSOCIATION

► Mark and Kim Harms started Harms Plainview Ranch of Lincolnville, Kan., from scratch in the early 1990s.

University animal science graduates. More than 15 years later, Mark and Kim Harms are living their dream with children Taylor, Cade and Payton on the ranch located on the edge of the Flint Hills near Lincolnville, Kan.

HPR is a diversified seedstock business, offering Angus, Red Angus and Charolais genetics. Their goals focus on producing seedstock with value for commercial and purebred cattle breeders, ongoing genetics education, improving efficiency and providing a solid foundation for future generations.

Mark started with Angus because of the breed's versatility, maternal and carcass merits. He purchased a set of functional Angus females and a yearling Angus bull, Hunt's Calculator. During the next 10 years, Calculator had a positive effect on HPR and the industry, serving as a herd-builder for the Harms family and other programs across the country. Calculator is recognized as a Pathfinder® Sire by the American Angus Association.

Red Angus were added to meet customer needs for hide color. A select group of Charolais females were introduced, too, as an option to add heterosis to predominantly British-bred programs.

Breeding decisions at the ranch are based on customer needs. HPR bulls typically have low birth weight (BW) and high calving ease direct (CED) expected progeny differences (EPDs) since 80% of those sold are used on heifers. Bulls that produce structurally sound maternal females are highly favored, as many customers retain replacement heifers. The breeding program consists of selecting for multiple traits, utilizing proven AI sires and a progressive embryo transfer (ET) program. Female emphasis is placed on structure, udders, muscle and fleshing ability.

What started with an offering of eight Angus bulls 14 years ago has grown to more than 180 Angus, Red Angus and Charolais bulls sold through private treaty. Nearly 600 breeding-age females make up spring and fall herds, with about 100 ET calves produced by cooperator herds.

Mark and Kim focus energy not only on improving their program and those of their customers, but also the lives of those around them as evidenced by support of youth programs, cattle and industry associations, church and community.

Harms Plainview Ranch was nominated by the Kansas Livestock Association.



Alabama

### Little Mountain Farm

**Owners: Randy and Joy Moody,  
New Market, Ala.**

Little Mountain Farm was established in 1997 as a family operation producing Simmental and SimAngus genetics. Once the decision to become a seedstock producer was made, the Moodys found the Simmental breed was a natural choice with their background with commercial Simmental bulls.

Little Mountain Farm consists of 40 mature cows, and the breeding program consists predominantly of ET and AI to make the best use of top-quality genetics in the Simmental breed. Four to five cows are selected as donors each year for the ET program. Performance records are scrutinized for optimal calving interval, gestation length, performance of dam and progeny, and a conformation appraisal for rib, volume and overall soundness. When selecting AI sires, EPDs and conformation are top priority. They emphasize producing progeny with breed average or above average values for long-term performance.

Fall and spring calving seasons are utilized. About 70% of calves are born Sept. 1 to Oct. 15, with the balance born in January or March. Two calving seasons allow Little Mountain Farm to serve customers of both seasons and provide cattle that satisfy customers and markets.

Little Mountain Farm utilizes the Alabama Beef Cattle Improvement Association (BCIA) bull evaluation program, and has bred multiple top-ranking Simmental and Simmental composite bulls through years of testing. The bull program is built on the philosophy of improving the genetics of each successive generation. Such goals have allowed Little Mountain Farm to consistently produce high-quality, well-balanced cattle that perform for purebred or commercial breeders.

Little Mountain Farm was nominated by the Alabama Beef Cattle Improvement Association.

### C.H. Morris & Sons

**Owners: Roger and Carolyn  
Morris, Appomattox, Va.**

C.H. Morris and Sons was established in 1952 as a family partnership, producing tobacco, corn and wheat with a Grade B dairy. In 1965, the

tobacco, wheat and dairy operations were eliminated. A commercial Angus beef cattle herd was developed, and a small sawmill was purchased and operated until 1993.

In 1986, the family bought a Gelbvieh bull. Two years later, C.H. Morris and Sons registered its first Gelbvieh and started a purebred herd. The cow herd currently consists of about 100 cows that calve in the fall. The farm also has two contract chicken breeder houses managed by a nephew. Waste from the poultry houses is utilized for fertilizer, so little commercial fertilizer has to be purchased.

The family maintains a strong commitment to performance principles and to satisfying commercial bull buyers. Commercial Gelbvieh bulls and Gelbvieh Balancer females are the focus. Bulls are sold private treaty off the farm. Thirty to 40 females are kept after weaning. Fifteen go back into the herd and the rest are sold in the Buckingham Cattlemen's Association Bred Heifer Sale. Feeder heifers

and steers are sold at a Buckingham Cattlemen's Association Feeder Calf telemarketing auction.

Roger and Carolyn strive to develop one of the best herds of black Gelbvieh genetics in North America. The American Gelbvieh Association Herd Track Program is the cornerstone of the operation's performance records. Genetic selection decisions for sires are based on disposition, postweaning growth, carcass quality and moderate frame size. Female selection is based on disposition, dam's record, individual performance, pelvic area and reproductive tract scores.

The Virginia Beef Cattle Improvement Association nominated C.H. Morris and Sons.



Iowa

### Nolin Red Angus

**Owners: Mike and Dianna Nolin,  
Gene and Marjorie Nolin,  
Jessica and Wyatt Barnett,  
Monroe, Iowa**

The Nolins are not strangers to farming and livestock. Cattle have been part of the family operation since 1881, when the Nolin family purchased the farm just outside of Monroe, Iowa. Mike and Dianna Nolin began farming in the 1980s. They moved to the family farm in 1987 and purchased their first cattle in 1988. In the early years, the Nolins had six different breeds of cattle, but they found Red Angus was the perfect fit and gradually phased out the other breeds.

The Nolin Red Angus herd consists of 40 purebred cows. The goal is to make each female raise a marketable calf. ET has helped, and the Nolins have a partnership with a Missouri breeder to quickly multiply their best genetics. Seventeen years of performance records handled by the American Red Angus Association have helped push weaning weights from about 600 pounds (lb.) to more than 700 lb.

Traits currently measured in the herd are birth weight, weaning weight, yearling weight, carcass data, structural soundness, heifer pregnancy and stayability. The Nolin calving season runs January to February in the spring and from August to October in the fall. Utilizing a 45-day breeding season has provided them with a more uniform and better calf crop. Seventy-five percent of the bull calves are sold as breeding bulls, primarily to commercial operations by private treaty or at consignment sales.

The Nolin family actively promotes youth programs. They've provided livestock to local judging teams and helped sponsor cattle projects for 4-H and FFA members who work on their farm. After Mike's retirement from 33 years with UPS, he has been able to devote more time to the cattle industry and the operation. In 2001, the Nolins also started a successful beef business featuring no added hormones.

The Iowa Cattlemen's Association nominated Nolin Red Angus.



South Dakota

### Schott Limousin Ranch

**Owners: Jim and Priscilla Schott,  
McLaughlin, S.D.**

Schott Limousin Ranch is nestled on the edge of the South Dakota Badlands near McLaughlin. The ranch is just west of the banks of the Missouri River, along the historic trails of Sitting Bull, Lewis and Clark and Chief Gall. The farm is also situated in the middle of one of the nation's largest Indian Reservations where General Custer once rode, so there is no shortage of history or legend.

Jim and Priscilla Schott manage more than 350 registered Limousin cows on the storied land. The ranch is also brimming with wildlife. Pheasant, grouse and partridge line the fields and trees, along with coyote and fox. Muley and whitetail deer tower along the jagged rocks of the buttes that split the ranch, and even bobcat and a mountain lion exist in the area.

The Schotts' main goal is to produce bulls that sire feeder calves that excel in feedlot performance and efficiency and rail acceptable carcasses. Performance data are measured throughout the year. Bulls with muscle, growth, feedlot performance and ruggedness are marketed through the farm's annual spring bull sale. The Schotts celebrated their 25th annual bull sale anniversary earlier in March.

Customers appreciate the cattle's good dispositions. Schott Limousin has maintained a reputation for rugged, easy-going, deep-bodied bulls that travel well on rough terrain and stand a South Dakota winter well. The Schotts similarly manage buffalo and bluestem pastures with strict authority. The goal is to maintain forage throughout the feeding period and leave the land better for the next generation.

Schott Limousin Ranch was nominated by the North American Limousin Foundation.

## South Dakota



## Thomas Ranch

**Owners: Harry and Troy Thomas Families, Harrold, S.D.**

Thomas Ranch is located east of Onida, S.D., in Sully County. Alvin and Gebe Thomas, Harry's parents, purchased 320 acres in 1931, where

the main ranch headquarters remains today. Harry and Kay Thomas moved to the ranch in 1964, after Harry graduated from South Dakota State University.

Today, Thomas Ranch has 5,000 acres at the home ranch location and another 4,000 acres leased for feed and pasture. Troy and Veabea Thomas have been part of the operation since 1994. Troy had

previously managed the Dewey Charolais operation in Cimarron, Kan., for five years.

Thomas Ranch calves 600-700 head of purebred Charolais and Angus females annually. Harry's first Charolais cattle originally came from Texas in 1964. Soon after, the Avignon breeding line from Nebraska was added to the herd to add maternal traits and environmental adaptability. Cow efficiency is one of the highest-priority performance measures, with pregnancy rate being extremely important. Females are only put into the donor program after proving udder quality and true performance.

The majority of the herd is calved late February to May, with about 60 head calving in a fall program. AI and performance records have been used continuously since 1963 and 1964, respectively. Heifers are synchronized and AIed in late May, and cows are bred during the month of June. Fall-calving cows are usually naturally bred to herd sires with limited AI service.

Performance data is collected and extensively used for bull selection and merchandising. Thomas Ranch markets 250 Charolais, Angus and Red Angus bulls in an annual bull sale. Bull customers have placed top economic/financial emphasis on birth and weaning weight. Currently, 28 Charolais bulls carry the Thomas Ranch prefix in the Charolais Sire Summary. Twelve proven sires are listed in the Proven Sire Summary, of which three are "in herd" ROE sires. Sixteen bulls are listed in the Young Sire Summaries. Five Angus bulls with the Thomas Ranch prefix are in the Angus Sire Summary.

The American International Charolais Association nominated Thomas Ranch.



**Editor's Note:** This article represents a compilation of news releases provided by BIF. More information about the organization can be found at [www.beefimprovement.org](http://www.beefimprovement.org). For more news from the conference, visit *Angus Productions Inc.'s (API's) online coverage site* at [www.bifconference.com](http://www.bifconference.com), a site made possible through the sponsorship of *Biozyme Inc.* and the cattlemen listed in the site's seedstock directory.

## In good company

The following list represents those producers who have earned the Beef Improvement Federation's Seedstock Producer of the Year title.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 2007 — Pelton Simmental/Red Angus, Kansas   | 1990 — Douglas & Molly Hoff, South Dakota                |
| 2006 — Sauk Valley Angus, Illinois  | 1989 — Glynn Debter, Alabama                             |
| 2005 — Rishel Angus, Nebraska   | 1988 — W.T. "Bill" Bennett, Washington                   |
| 2004 — Camp Cooley Ranch, Texas   | 1987 — Henry Gardiner, Kansas                            |
| 2003 — Moser Ranch, Kansas  | 1986 — Leonard Lodden, North Dakota                      |
| 2002 — Circle A Ranch, Missouri   | 1985 — Ric Hoyt, Oregon                                  |
| 2001 — Sydenstricker Genetics, Missouri   | 1984 — Lee Nichols, Iowa                                 |
| 2000 — Fink Beef Genetics, Kansas   | 1983 — Bill Borrer, California                           |
| 1999 — Morven Farms, Virginia   | 1982 — A.F. "Frankie" Flint, New Mexico                  |
| 1998 — Flying H Genetics, Nebraska, and Knoll Crest Farms, Virginia                 | 1981 — Bob Dickinson, Kansas                             |
| 1997 — Bob & Gloria Thomas, Oregon<br>Nicholas Wehrmann & Richard McClung, Virginia | 1980 — Bill Wolfe, Oregon                                |
| 1996 — Frank Felton, Missouri   | 1979 — Jim Wolfe, Nebraska                               |
| 1995 — Tom & Carolyn Perrier, Kansas  | 1978 — James D. Bennett, Virginia                        |
| 1994 — Richard Janssen, Kansas  | 1977 — Glen Burrows, New Mexico                          |
| 1993 — R.A. "Rob" Brown, Texas, and J. David Nichols, Iowa                          | 1976 — Jorgensen Brothers, South Dakota                  |
| 1992 — Leonard Wulf & Sons, Minnesota   | 1975 — Leslie J. Holden, Montana<br>Jack Cooper, Montana |
| 1991 — Summitcrest Farms, Ohio  | 1974 — Carlton Corbin, Oklahoma                          |
|   | 1973 — Mrs. R. W. Jones Jr., Georgia                     |
|   | 1972 — John Crowe, California                            |