

A Texas-Style Challenge

Producers rise to the challenge, committing more than \$487,000 to Angus Foundation's research, youth and education initiatives.

by *Shelia Stannard*

More than 250 Angus breeders from Texas and elsewhere joined Klaus and Bonnie Birkel at their scenic Camp Cooley Ranch near Franklin, Texas, April 28 for the kick-off of The Texas Challenge. This event was hosted to raise funds to support Angus education, youth and research efforts through the Angus Foundation.

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 raise \$250,000 in matching funds at \$50,000 per year during the next five years.



Impressive by any measure, including the Birkels generous challenge, outright gifts and multiyear pledges received now total more than \$487,000 in support of The Texas Challenge, while counting simultaneously toward the \$11 million Vision of Value: Campaign for Angus goal.

"Validated by over \$75,000 in outright gifts and pledges far exceeding the 2007 first-year goal of \$50,000 for The Texas Challenge, it is safe to say that Texas Angus breeders have risen to the challenge," says Milford Jenkins, Angus Foundation president. "As a member of the campaign's leadership cabinet, visionary Angus breeder and a philanthropist at heart, Klaus viewed it as his responsibility to invest significantly in the Angus breed and help add value to education, youth and research for the benefit of future generations of Angus breeders in Texas and

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►**Above:** Foundation President Milford Jenkins (left) honored event hosts Bonnie and Klaus Birkel for their \$250,000 pledge to the Angus Foundation's campaign and for their leadership role in initiating The Texas Challenge.

►**Right:** Texas Angus Association President Randy Roden served as emcee for the evening.

►**Below:** Texas-shaped statues were presented to donors contributing \$5,000 or more.



across the United States by supporting the Angus Foundation.”

The Texas Challenge provides donors the freedom to designate how their gifts will be used by the Angus Foundation in the areas of education, youth and research. The Birkels unselfishly earmarked \$75,000 of their contribution to establish a Texas Angus Association Scholarship Endowment Fund in the Angus Foundation to provide scholarships to Angus youth from Texas. With a keen interest in research and education, the Birkels designated 50% of their personal pledge to research, with the remaining balance of their gift assigned to education for Angus breeders.

“I am committed 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,” Klaus says. “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.”

Guests were treated to beautiful decorations around a “Six Flags over Texas” theme, live entertainment by three-time Grammy nominee Dave Alexander and a delicious *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) steak professionally cut by Freedman Meats Inc. of Houston, Texas.

Texas Angus Association President Randy Roden served as emcee for the event, with guest speakers including John Crouch, American Angus Association executive vice president; Howard Hillman, chairman of the Vision of Value: Campaign for Angus Leadership Cabinet; and Jenkins.

“The power of one idea; the power of one ranch and the power of one campaign are incredible,” Crouch said during the event. “Using the above statements from our most successful national advertising campaign to date, I know that the power of one Texas Challenge will be phenomenal in influencing Texas breeders to support the Angus Foundation during a successful campaign. The Angus Foundation’s growth will help ensure the future success of the beef industry for decades to come.”

For more information on The Texas Challenge and Vision of Value: Campaign for Angus, contact Jenkins at mjenkins@angusfoundation.org or 816-383-5100.



► A magician entertained the crowd of Angus enthusiasts gathered to support the launch of the fundraising challenge that aims to raise \$50,000 each year for the Vision of Value: Campaign for Angus.



► A digital sign above The Dave Alexander Band, which provided dancing music for the evening, marked the progress of pledges received toward the five-year challenge.



► More than 250 people attended the dinner and dance, which was themed “Six Flags over Texas.”