

Dandy Acres 2014 Breeder of the Year

The Angus herd at Dandy Acres has been the common thread through 49 years of changes on the farm at Pipestone MN. Starting as Gregg's 4-H and FFA project in high school, the herd has been the basis of partnerships with Gregg's father, Goodwin, and his brother Roger. Most recently Gregg and Nancy have shared the interest in the cattle with their children Mark, Neil and Kimberly as they grew up in the Angus business. Currently Gregg and Nancy are in partnership with their son Neil in the cattle.

For Gregg, the early decision to build an Angus herd was easy. The fact that Angus "hung their hat on" mothering ability, carcass quality and easy calving drew Gregg to the Angus breed. In the 60's the MN State Sale was in Pipestone, giving Gregg the opportunity to be a founding member of the MN Jr. Angus Association. The foundation of the Dandy Acres herd was purchased from Darrell Heesch, Hatfield MN. The first two heifers purchased for \$125 each. The next addition was a bred heifer purchased at the MN State Sale from Strickler Angus, Euclid MN.

In the early years of the herd there was no AI allowed in the breed. The first heifers were taken to the Paul Kraft farm near Jasper, MN to be bred by his bull. He charged \$10 to breed the 2 heifers. Paul who was the Secretary Treasurer of the Association at the time was a great mentor and helped get the early project going.

The first bull purchased was Pasha E&B49, in 1967 from Enoch and Bob Johnson of Ida Grove, Iowa. He came home in the back of a pickup with stock racks. It was quite a trip. Soon after that Gregg purchased the high selling bull at the dispersal of Shady Lane Angus, Clear Lake SD.

One of the most enjoyable purchases was 1/3 interest in Whitestone General Max F202 from Whitestone Farm Aldie, Virginia. He was Calf Champion at the National Western, Intermediate Champion at Louisville and later Intermediate Champion in Denver. These and other winning shows made him ROV Intermediate Champion in 1996. He was a performance show bull. Another herd builder was a heifer shown by Kim Johnson at the 2003 MN State Fair. Rocky Branch Promptitude was the Supreme Champion 4-H Heifer that year and is the dam of several current herd mates.

The herd started using AI in 1976. It soon became the primary approach to the breeding program. The embryo transfer program took off when Neil became an embryologist in 2004. Today all cows are bred AI or receive an embryo and are then pasture exposed to Dandy Acres herd bulls. Gregg and Neil share the herd management and work responsibilities.

Dandy Acres first sold bulls through private treaty sales from the farm. In 1994 the first annual production sale was held at the farm. This sale has grown over the years and is held the second Sat. of April each year. New this year is a fall female sale, scheduled for the day after Thanksgiving.

Participation in the MN Angus Association has been tradition for the whole family.

Gregg and Nancy had the pleasure of working as Jr. Association leaders for several years while their children were part of the junior group. Nancy enjoys working with and getting to know women in the state auxiliary Neil is serving as the Angus Representative for the MN Livestock Breeders Association. Gregg has served on the Board of Directors for 3 terms. Getting to know fellow Angus breeders and friends through involvement in the State Angus Association has been a highlight of involvement in the Angus business. The Johnson family looks forward to their 50th year in the Angus business and continued involvement in the MN Angus Association.