

# Red Angus in our Past, Present and Future...

Written by JRA National Board of Directors

## **Amber Boyles, JRA President, Kernersville, NC**

Fall break is here, calving season has begun for us, and I think about how happy I am when I'm out in the pasture checking cows and not in the big city of Raleigh. I have realized that I'm trying to sell a few cows to help out with some school bills, but yet I'm turning right back around and wanting to buy some heifers. With the city limits coming right up on top of us, I hope that Red Angus will play as big of a role in my future as it has in my past.

We have had Red Angus cattle all of my life. My granddaddy bought the first bull in '81 and my parents bought their first Red Angus animal in '83, but about fourteen years ago was when Jimmy walked into my life. Literally, he comes walking up the middle of the rest of the cows balling for his mom. It was one of our better cows and she had twins, a bull and a heifer, and she rejected the bull calf. So I asked Daddy if I could keep him and take care of him and I guess he decided that this would be a good chance for me to have my first big responsibility. The

best part of it all was that he was my calf, my own calf, that was all to myself and he wasn't in my parents' name, he was registered in my name. He listened to me and pretty much only me and he didn't really like anybody else messing with him. A couple years later I bought my first heifer which was the beginning of it all for me. That heifer is now ten years old and there are three of her daughters out in the pasture with her, not to mention her bull calves that I either sold or steered to make freezer beef. I've grown my own herd up now and with the help of my brother and a family friend we take care of mine and our grandmother's cattle with the city growing up around us.

As a senior at NC State and graduation coming up, everyone wants to know what I'm going to do. Two years ago during Round-Up in Texas, we took a tour at Texas Tech where they have their own herd of Red Angus cattle. My mom and I fell in love with the campus and I've been interested ever since in going to grad school there. I'm planning to apply with hopes of getting accepted. But when school is done and over with, I will have a

degree in Agricultural Education with two minors in Extension Education and Animal Science. I hope to be able to have my reds available for my students for lessons and give them the influence that I have had from so many great people over the years. I haven't figured out yet how I'm going to handle being away from my cows if I move for grad school though...

No matter what else the future holds for me, whether I'm in a classroom teaching or actually being able to farm, I hope to keep all the friendships I've made along the way. I can honestly say I have friends all over the United States. I know I'm not the only one that views the Red Angus Association as a family instead of a business and I've always felt that. That friend you call up to ask how their new job is going might normally be someone in your church, mine lives 14 hours away. That friend who sends you weekly emails to update you on their life might be a family member that lives on the same street as you, mine is in South America. That friend you cry for because they are crying and in pain could be your best friend you've known all your life, mine just

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wanted to win Stockgrowers one time before she aged out. If I can't keep my Red Angus cows to make me happy, I hope I will always have my Red Angus friends that have been in my past, present, and future.

### **Megan Johnson, JRA 2nd Vice President, Nunn, CO**

Holding my father's hand, walking through the tall grass of the pasture at the age of six years old going to look at my brand new Red Angus cow - what a vivid memory this scene holds for me. A family friend gave the cow to me and I was one of the happiest kids around. It was the first cow of my very own. It stayed that way for a little while, but I then bought two more cows. I was only nine and had three cows of my very own! I just liked to raise them; I was still scared to show. I could handle driving the truck while Dad threw hay, going on Saturdays and Sundays to check cows, moving them on horseback, and even cleaning the water tanks, but showing, that was not for me! I was still scared of the whole idea. It wasn't until I was a brave sixth grader that I decided to be in the Red Angus Junior Stockgrowers program. I was really skeptical, I wasn't so sure that the Yards at the National Western were the place for me, but I stuck it out. The program ended up being the highlight of my whole year and I could not wait for the next year to come around just so I could participate again. During my second year at Junior Stockgrowers, I heard about another program involving junior members of the Red Angus Association. It was Round-Up, and my parents forced me to go. I was awfully shy and I did not want to get out of my box, but I went and had a blast! I continued with Stockgrowers until I became too old, and I still participate at Round-Up and will until I "age out".

That brings us to the present.

Because of Round-Up, I now serve on the National Junior Board as the second vice president. If it were not for the cow I was given when I was six, I would not be nearly as involved in the Red Angus breed as I am today. Not only do I have a passion for raising cattle, but also I have a passion for the breed of cattle I raise. The cattle opened doors for me through the breed association, but also they have helped me attend college. I have saved and used the money I have earned raising them to help me with the expense of college. I currently have five cow/calf pairs of my own that I plan to keep around for a long time.

Cattle are a tremendous part of my life, they always have been. In my future, Red Angus will continue to fund my college education. From the past but continuing into my future, Red Angus have helped shape my goals of becoming involved in Agricultural Education. By being involved with Red Angus cattle and the National Junior Association, I now have the desire and ability to work with youth and agriculture. I will continue to have a great herd of my own, and hopefully I will still run cattle with my Dad. If it were not for him, I would not have the passion for cattle I do now. I want to be able to sit on the calm peaceful patio of my home and look at a beautiful pasture full of beautiful Red Angus cows.

### **Marianne Mendoza, JRA 1st Vice President, Valley Springs, CA**

I'm sitting here on my little balcony outside of my apartment in Chico, getting as close to the outdoors as I can, being in the city now, I can't go outside and look at the stars or listen to the nothingness that is outdoors at home. Instead, I'm listening to the cars and trains that constantly go past, and, unfortunately, look into my neighbor's windows. I'm thinking about how I got here, what I am doing now, and what lies ahead of me, and how my Red Angus helped me with it all.

About nine years ago, I bought my first Red Angus cow, Iona, from my parents; she was just a little heifer then, out of our first calf crop, and my new pet. I took Iona to the fair that year, and continued to take her for pretty much all of the next eight years, every year she won the Champion Cow/Calf pair, and has still yet to lose. Starting about year three of owning cattle; I was able to take a Red Angus steer to the county fair, and have every year since, never winning champion with them, since it seems that club calves rule the California show scene, even at county fairs. I was still very proud of my steers, mainly because they are MINE and I can produce a quality product at the end of my project for my consumer. Three out of four of my past project steers have graded Prime, an accomplishment I can account to their superior Red Angus genetics and a pretty good feeding plan. This is much more important to me than any championship, being able to raise an animal from before conception until harvest and have them do well is quite an accomplishment for anyone and I am proud to have the opportunity to do it.

I am now at California State University, Chico, obviously located in

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Chico, CA, working on my bachelor degree in Animal Science with a minor in Chemistry. I am in my second year and have been able to pay for all my school fees through the money I had gained through my Red Angus herd. Three years ago, I was very set on attending University of California, Davis, but in the summer of 2004, I attended the annual JRA Round-Up, which was held in California that year. We came up to Chico State and saw the coolest thing, which was a steer being butchered right in front of us in the Chico State Meats Lab. I thought then that it would be neat to be able to go to school here, not just because of the Meats lab but because they actually have their own herd of Red Angus cattle. So, when I applied to schools, I applied to the big three, Davis, Chico, and San Luis Obispo, got into all of them, but I felt much more at home in Chico and the fact that they actually owned Red Angus made the choice even easier.

I feel very lucky to be on the Junior Red Angus Board and to be able to see a lot of the United States. I know I wouldn't have even considered leaving California for more than a few days, but now I'm thinking of attending a vet school out of state because I have seen more of the country. I certainly wouldn't have even thought that I would be able to go to so many cattle events, and experience so many different weather conditions. I have met countless numbers of influential people not only in the Red Angus, but in the cattle industry as a whole. Plus, I have made friendships with people from across the country that will last me many more years. I do see Red Angus in my future, but to what extent it plays I think is still yet to be determined. I don't know if I will eventually become a Red Angus breeder on my own or if I will just have some cows on the side of my veterinary business. I do know that Red Angus as a whole, including the cows and the people, have left an impact on my life, for my past, present and future.

### **Kristina Weidenbach, JRA Fund Raising Director, Highmore, SD**

Arthur Buddhold said "Follow your passion, and success will follow you." Personally, my passion is Red Angus cattle. As quoted above, success has followed me. Involvement in the Red Angus breed has presented uncountable opportunities for me. It has had an influence on who I am today and whom I will become in the future.

Red Angus has been an integral part of my life, as far back as I can remember. I recall checking pastures with my dad; looking for the new baby calves. I had my own little herd book, recording the calves' numbers and birthdates. My official chore during calving season was to hand the ear tagger and the vaccination gun through the window to Dad after he had caught the calf.

One eighty three was the tag number of the Red Angus cow who used to run to the vehicle when it entered the pasture. She was looking for the salt and corn treats I would take to her. Not all of the cows were that tame or spoiled but it does attest to the calm nature of the Red Angus breed that I and my family have grown accustomed to.

At eight years old, I joined the Northwest Rangers 4-H Club. Reagan, was my first Red Angus show heifer. Reagan was the first and there have been many more since, but she holds a special place in my memory. Showing cattle has opened many doors for me. I have met many wonderful people, both Red Angus enthusiasts as well as beef industry leaders. My knowledge of the beef industry has been expanded through judging, showing and interacting with fellow beef producers.

Today, Red Angus is a priority in my life. Every second spent in the show barn washing and preparing cattle for the numerous shows, Red Angus is part of who I am. Not only have I gotten to take part in something I absolutely love but I have had many

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opportunities arise due to my involvement. Sitting on the Junior Red Angus Board has allowed me to further my involvement in the breed; an opportunity for which I am grateful to be experiencing. Acquaintances and friendships make me realize how genuine the Red Angus breed is. The junior activities, cattle sales, and the show ring have all increased my knowledge of the cattle industry. I am aware of the advances that have been made and the challenges that we face in the future.

Red Angus will forever hold a place in my heart. I am looking forward to the future of the breed. I believe that we are on the right track; with our existing members, and the eager young members to come, our breed is going to be explosive. All aspects will further this growth; the show ring, the seed stock business and the commercial cross-breeding programs involving Red Angus are all integral parts of our future growth. Red Angus, I believe has shaped my present through my past experiences and I am looking forward to the growth and changes that will occur in the future as I stay involved with the Red Angus breed.

### **Laura Musherush, JRA Public Relations Director, Strong City, KS**

I remember it just like it was yesterday. We had an old cow that we had kept just long enough to get a live calf out of her to sell them as a pair. After the cow had her calf, my dad was loading her and her heifer calf on the trailer when my dad decided that the calf would make a good 4-H project for me. I was very excited to come home from school to find a new calf waiting for me, and decided to call her Blossom. Blossom was the start of my Red Angus career.

Red Angus has also had a very big role in my 4-H experiences. My first 4-H bucket calf that I took to the fair as a calf and the next year as breeding heifer, and all the steers that I have ever taken to the fair have always been Red Angus-cross. My favorite was Fat Boy. Fat Boy's dam was a commercial cow that was bred by one of our bull's that a customer had bought. We later bought back the Red Angus-cross calves and feed them in our feed lot. Fat Boy was my first steer and I took him to the Stockgrowers Contest during the National Western Stock Show. Those days at the Stock Show were great learning experiences.

Currently Red Angus is a huge part of my life. By now, Blossom is long gone and I have a larger, more proficient cattle herd. I have been keeping all of my females to expand my herd to help pay for college two years from now. All of my cattle are evaluated with my parent's cattle and culled if necessary. All of my culls are put into my parents' feed lot and marketed through the Feeder Calf Certification Program. I sell any bulls that I have in our March Bull Sale.

In the future I plan on going to school at Kansas State University and major in Agriculture Communications and Journalism. Of course, that could very easily change when I get up to K-State. I do know for sure that I want to be part of the Agriculture and Journalism world's when I get older.

Being on the Red Angus Junior Board has already had a great impact on my life. The amazing people that I have met that are passionate about what they do, impresses me greatly. Also the friendships that I have already made will have lasting bonds in the future.

I hope to someday return to my family's ranch. If my mom has her way, it will be with a rich guy who likes to work on the computer, cook and clean. Red Angus has been my past, is my present, and will be my future. ■