



FEATURE STORY

THIS ISN'T THEIR FIRST RODEO

Pipestone-area kids have been learning the finer points of riding, roping, and maneuvering cattle from Kelly and Alan Jones for years. Every Friday night during the summer, 4-H members stop by for practice, pointers, and conversation in the Jones's unusual family room—in the barn.

Sitting at the table in the pine-paneled rec room Kelly and Alan describe their passion—ranch rodeo—and the herd of Longhorn steers they keep specifically so local kids can learn the sport.

So what exactly is ranch rodeo? Kelly explains these events show off practical skills including learning to track cattle and making sure you and your horse stay in tune with the steer.

In the sorting event, a four-person team must bring a specific steer across a starting line, chase it into a trailer, close the interior gate, load one horse in the trailer and close the outer gate, then race to the front of the trailer to signal finish. One minute 30 seconds would be a typical time local kids achieve for this event.

Getting to that level requires cattle to practice on. That brings us back to the Longhorns. "No, they're not terribly commercial," Alan admits. "But they're very smart, knowing how to avoid us in the ring. When I bring them to the sale barn I do get some looks, though!"

Wouldn't the sale barn crowd be even more astounded if Alan roped one of his Longhorns in the ring? "He took roping lessons in South Dakota," says Kelly.

Although Kelly doesn't rope, she's very much part of teaching 4-Hers new skills. Kelly councils kids in working the cattle and choosing the right gear.

YOU WIN SOME AND...

Those Longhorns have plenty of tricks. Once while Dr. Jay Bobb was making a vet call Alan tackled a calf and managed to knock out his own front teeth! "Dr. Bobb said, 'I can do about anything for animals but I can't help you with this.'" Alan recalls. "He felt really bad about it, which is a shame because he and everyone else at the Vet Clinic are always so helpful and friendly!" ■



G. F. Kennedy, D.V.M.
G. D. Spronk, D.V.M.
J. D. Bobb, D.V.M.
B. R. Kerkaert, D.V.M.

J. L. Goelz, D.V.M.
L. W. Minion, D.V.M.
C. S. Schmitt, D.V.M.
S. R. Wayne, D.V.M.

C. W. Vlietstra, D.V.M.
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COTTONWOOD ANGUS RANCH STANDS FIRMLY ROOTED IN PRAIRIE SOIL

Gregg Butman's roots run deep in Pipestone County soil, deeper than most. He's an ATV-driving encyclopedia of prairie botany, animal husbandry, and his family's 131-year history in these parts. He grew up on two sections of uncultivated prairie acres, the first land homesteaded in Pipestone County. Gregg lives surrounded by the very elements that attracted his great-grandfather to this place—ample native grass and spring-fed water for cattle.

Great-grandpa might disagree with Gregg about the cattle themselves, though. The stock he drove cross-country from the Tracy, MN railhead in 1878 were horned-Herefords. Today 300 Angus cows and calves drink the spring water he located while native people watched from up on the ridge.

The Flandreau Creek trickles right through the Cottonwood Angus building site defining a curve near Gregg and Dianne's house. "We understand why great-grandpa wanted to build near water but we always wonder why he had to build right on top of it!" Gregg jokes.

You might imagine everything here is altered after four generations. But you'd be wrong. That's not to say Gregg isn't a proponent of modern artificial insemination (AI) and genetic testing for his livestock. Yes, he can name the scientist who's done the most work mapping the bovine genome... but he can also point with pride to a vast expanse of land untouched by the plow in all these years.

Over 1,200 rolling pasture acres were never tilled, just respectfully grazed to support successive cattle generations. As a result, this land serves as a field resource for prairie

plant experts, none more expert than Gregg! Some plants on these Cottonwood Angus hills no longer grow wild anywhere else in Minnesota.

The effort to preserve rare native plants was no accident. "We do a lot of pasture management," Gregg explains. "You have to be careful of native species when you spray and you have to make sure some plants—needle grass is one—are grazed but not allowed to go to seed."

To protect the land from erosion, and shelter the cows, great-granddad planted trees in the wide-open pastures. Gregg points to a grove his ancestor created, "I'm the tree-planter in my generation," he says. "I've planted five or six thousand."

Family members appreciate the wildlife trees and prairie plants attract. Deer, coyotes, wild turkeys, pheasants, and mink move freely through the hills along with a pair of determined beavers who did away with 75 pine trees last fall. (Naturally, Gregg will plant more.)

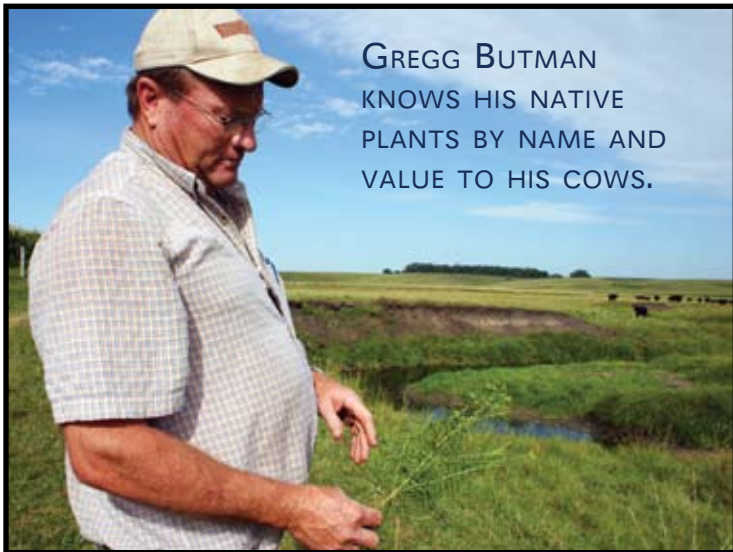
EACH GENERATION INHERITS A TRADITION

Gregg credits his grandfather, his father, Bob, and his brother, Bruce, and his sister, Phyllis, for keeping the prairies, the history, and the ranch itself alive. Only his mother, Eloise, remains to see how carefully her descendents tend the legacy.

"She's the one who kept the farm going three days a week when my dad became an auctioneer. He started auctioneering after the Great Depression forced Grandpa to sell off all our better farming ground," Gregg explains.



DAKOTA GOLD, A RESERVE BULL WAITING FOR HIS CALL TO DUTY, SURVEYS THE COTTONWOOD ANGUS HOMESTEAD AND PINES FOR A LITTLE COMPANY.



GREGG BUTMAN KNOWS HIS NATIVE PLANTS BY NAME AND VALUE TO HIS COWS.

In the mid-1950s brother Bruce became a force in the ranch operation introducing the first Angus bulls. Both Bruce and his father died too young, as did Gregg's sister, Phyllis Oye. Her husband, Lyle, who lives nearby, remains an active member of the organization, though.

Today family members specialize. Phyllis and Lyle's son, Lance, heads up the cropping and haying operations on 2,500 owned and leased acres. (Gregg reclaimed land sold in the 1930s.)

Gregg and Dianne's son, Justin, works approximately 300 registered cows on horseback aided by a whip-smart red border collie.

Showing cattle consumes less Butman time than it once did when the family took home honors from Denver and Louisville. Today their marketing program centers on a private bull sale in the spring where they offer the top one-third of their production. Then, on the first Saturday in November Cottonwood Angus holds its own production show selling mostly females and about a dozen bulls.

Gregg and Justin work with Dr. Larry Goelz and Dr. Jay Bobb of the Pipestone Vet Clinic. "They're our advisors for disease prevention, which is very important because we're seed-stock producers. Our customers need to trust us, so we depend on the Vet Clinic," Gregg explains.

He gives a strong endorsement to a recent animal health innovation at work in his pastures. Cows wear personal insect protection in a distinctive ear tag (Y.Tex XP 820 available from the Vet Clinic) and horn flies clearly stay away.

Modern insecticide tags adorn cows on ancient pastureland. It's an obvious tribute to the combination of history and science at Cottonwood Angus. ■

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

ALL SHE EVER WANTED TO DO

NEW CLINIC VET LIVES HER DREAM

Dr. Carissa Schloesser is finally doing exactly what she always wanted. The St. Peter, MN native grew up on a sheep farm envisioning her future as a veterinarian. Part-way through her training she also knew precisely where she'd want to practice.

"I did an internship here at the Vet Clinic in 2006 and loved working with the people and the pigs!" she enthuses. "As long as I can remember, this is what I wanted to do. All through 4-H and FFA years I was planning for this outcome."

"Eventually I hope to be working with swine producers. But right now I'm enjoying doing just about everything."

Lately she's had to spend a certain amount of time specializing in wedding plans. Dr. Schloesser will become Dr. Odland in October when the recent University of

Minnesota graduate marries Isaac, an engineer who works in Sioux Falls, SD. The couple intends to live in the Pipestone area.

Once the wedding preoccupation ends

Carissa hopes she'll once again find free time for hunting and fishing. In an era when young women enter best-marriage-proposal contests Carissa tells a low-key story about her outdoorsy interests and fiancé, Isaac. "He proposed while we were fishing. We were out on a lake. There was a sunrise. It was great, but no big drama." Maybe not...but obviously exactly what she wanted. ■



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ALL SHE EVER WANTED TO DO

THIS DOG WILL HUNT!

BY NICOLE WEBER, DVM

Long before you clean your guns and pack your truck for a fall hunting trip, spend time properly preparing your dog for the adventure. Here are the most important ways to pre-condition and protect your dedicated hunting companion.

Start a good exercise program. Adequately condition your dog for the workout ahead. Dogs walk an additional 1-5 miles for every mile a hunter travels.

Update vaccinations. On the hunt, your dog is more likely to encounter rabies-carrying raccoons, skunks, bats, cats, and other dogs. Make sure vaccinations are current.

Leptospirosis, a disease we're seeing more often in our area, can spread from dogs to humans. Dogs contract the condition from contact with urine from an infected

animal. In the most extreme, untreated cases result is liver or kidney disease. Call the Vet Clinic to arrange a specific vaccination for leptospirosis.

Take steps against ticks. A dog's Lyme disease symptoms—joint pain and signs of arthritis—typically don't occur until months after infection. A tick preventative before your trip will limit your dog's tick exposure.

Prepare for warm weather. Dogs may overheat while hunting but in their enthusiasm for the task at hand they'll forget to stop. Plan to enforce periodic breaks for shade and water if the weather turns hot.

Build a dog first-aid kit:

- Rectal thermometer (99° – 102.5° F)
- Rolled gauze and gauze squares
- Bandaging fabric such as vet wrap
- Adhesive tape
- Tweezers
- Towel
- Hydrogen peroxide to field-clean wounds.

Consider a chest-protector. We see dogs with lacerated chests and legs, injuries a chest protector may prevent. However, if your dog is cut use items in your first-aid kit to clean and dress the wound and seek medical treatment right away to prevent complications. ■

