



# *Just Work Harder*

*Setting goals, working hard help  
Clint and Rachel Hunter chart their course.*

*by Joann Pipkin*



*Raising any other breed of cattle was never an option for Clint Hunter. A fifth-generation Angus breeder, Clint's great-great-grandfather, William H. Parker, in 1920 was the first to bring the cattle to Dent County, Mo.*

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A direct product of the Show Me State's junior Angus program, today Clint credits that involvement with helping him not only discover his passion, but also meeting his wife, Rachel.

"Angus cattle brought us together," Clint says.

A junior member in 2004, Rachel showed a heifer in the same class as Clint's brother, Jordan, at the Missouri Cattlemen's Association Junior Angus Show in Sedalia. Rachel's heifer claimed victory over Jordan's in class that day, an event of which Clint took special note.

While all good stories begin in the wash rack, Clint and Rachel's conversation later that day would actually blossom into a future together raising Angus cattle and sharing their passion for youth development in their home state.

Married in June 2006, today Clint and Rachel are raising Angus cattle with his family in Southwest Missouri near Fair Grove. In addition to Clint and Rachel, Clint's parents, David and Norma "GiGi," and brother Jordan and wife Cheratin operate Hunter Angus.

### *Fostering Angus roots*

Clint credits his mother's family for fostering his passion for Angus cattle. His great-grandfather, Virgil Parker, as well as his grandparents, Bob and

Vivian Jordan, planted the original seeds in him from an early age.

"I went to my first county fair and junior shows there in Salem at the Dent County Fair," Clint recalls.

His parents purchased the family's present farm in 1992, and Clint grew up attending Missouri and national junior Angus events.

"The biggest thing it taught me is how to communicate with people and get involved," he explains. "I wasn't the most involved in contests, but I was very involved in everything we did as a junior association on a state level. We have gone to junior nationals every year except one since 1995."

While Rachel's Angus roots tell a different story than Clint's, her passion for the breed is undeniably true.

Growing up on a farm in north Missouri near Mendon, Rachel says her family converted much of their land from pasture into crops as grain was more valuable than raising cattle at the time. When Rachel was old enough to take part in livestock shows, she begged her parents, Ron and Connie McGilvray, for a calf rather than a pig.

Longtime friends, the Bill Brockman family, helped Rachel get her first 4-H project in 1992. She was hooked, and went on to take part in the Missouri Junior Angus Association, attending her



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first National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in 1999 in Tulsa, Okla.

When the couple married, Rachel brought along her matriarch Angus cow to join the Hunters' herd.

### *Growing up Angus*

Being raised a fifth-generation Angus breeder comes with a sense of expectancy and drive — and pride, Clint says. It's that pride he wants most to share with his grandfather when he and Rachel win a show.

As a junior Angus member, Rachel's involvement in contests at the NJAS, especially cook-off and public speaking, helped teach her how to step out of her comfort zone.

"Getting to go to junior nationals became our vacation," she explains. "The Association and the junior board members were big-time mentors to me. Now, we still stay in touch with those people that I looked up to for so long and who are now our peers in this business."

While the husband and wife team make cow herd breeding and other management decisions, Clint and Rachel's involvement in Angus activities remains a family affair.

"I like the fact that everyone's involved because we grew up doing this as a family," Clint says. "Now, we can bring two families together. When we have our sale, Rachel's mom and dad are here. When we go to a show, they're there. We try to keep the family the focus of what we're doing."

### *Coming back home*

Clint and Rachel joined his family's operation soon after their marriage. In addition to working on the farm, in 2000 Clint became an auctioneer and now works almost 30 cattle auctions each year.

The businesses work hand-in-hand, as cooperating with other cattle breeders gives him the opportunity to network and see Angus genetics in action on other farms and ranches.

While Clint is away on business, Rachel assumes much of the farm responsibilities. The two share

in mating decisions, but Rachel tackles most of the other farm chores, including feeding, heat detection, artificial insemination (AI), and caring for their show and sale cattle. She also manages a business she can operate from anywhere, which is helpful when she and Clint are away at cattle events.

"Rachel brings a different set of eyes to the equation," Clint credits. "When I'm gone as much as I am with my auction business, if we need to adjust what the show cattle are being fed, Rachel can do that. We don't need to have that phone conversation about it. The more active role that both of us have here has helped us grow more together. And, it's made us more successful."

### *Carving their niche*

For the last 12 years, Clint and Rachel have focused on expanding their cow herd through both embryo

transfer and *in vitro* fertilization (IVF). Their target market consists of Angus juniors in search of show-quality females.

"We feel like we can improve our herd quicker through IVF and embryo work than we can with just using AI on our cow herd," Clint explains. "It's helped

us tremendously the last three to five years."

Improving the genetic base of their cow herd assists the Hunters in reaching their long-term goals. They've hosted a show-heifer sale the past two years and hope to add bred females to the offering in the future.

"When we sell those heifers, that's where our role begins," Clint explains. "That's when we take over and go help those kids. It's one thing to raise and sell them. It's another to stay with those heifers and those families and those kids."

Rachel chimes in, "We want to help those juniors like we had help. Give them the tools and knowledge that we have to pass along. We want them to know how to care for those heifers."

Both Clint and Rachel acknowledge the need for customer service in today's purebred beef cattle business. "I want the customer to feel like a piece of



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our family and us to feel like a piece of theirs, too,” Rachel says.

Developing customer relationships often begins by simply picking up the phone and reaching out. It’s a strategy Clint and Rachel aren’t afraid to implement. Customer follow-up, whether by text or phone call, goes beyond right after the sale. They want to foster the customer relationship all the way through breeding.

“It doesn’t matter whether we’re selling cows or new cars, it’s so competitive,” Clint explains. “The customer isn’t really buying the cattle; they’re buying the program. But, it takes a lot of work.”

That said, the Hunters strive to combine specialized customer service with savvy marketing to carve their niche in an ever-competitive Angus business. Social media marketing plays an integral role in that. That’s something Clint says Rachel is great at.

“From the social media side, Rachel is so good at putting words into text and getting the message out,” Clint says.

Still, Rachel adds that word-of-mouth is the most effective advertising campaign you can ask for. “When you’re small, you’ve got to figure out where you want to put your money accordingly that’s going to benefit you the most.”

As a young producer with a relatively small herd, Clint says branding their operation has been one of the biggest hurdles they’ve had to overcome.

“It’s so easy to fall in the trap of chasing this or chasing that, or even in a breeding program,” he explains. “For us, we decided we want to raise high-quality show cattle.”

Rachel chimes in, “And for the quantity of cattle that we have, it’s not like we can have a set of calves that do this and a set of calves that do that. We have to have a focus to concentrate on and work toward that.”

While the Hunters do sell a few bulls each year, they realize that side of the Angus business is notably competitive, especially for small producers.

“We’re passionate about the show heifers,” Clint says. “And, it all goes back to working with families. We like working with the families.”

### *Paying it forward*

With a passion for Angus cattle and a strong work ethic matched equally by their interest in educating young people, Clint and Rachel have set the bar high for themselves.

It’s a trait the two come by honestly. Rachel herself is a former agricultural education teacher; her mom, Connie, is in education; and both of Clint’s parents, grandmothers and a great-grandfather were teachers also.

In August, the couple wrapped up a three-year stint as advisors for the Missouri Junior Angus Association, where they spent countless hours fostering young Angus breeders and showmen.

“The junior programs helped shape us,” Clint says. “Being junior advisors and helping kids is a way for us to keep giving back.”

He encourages young Angus breeders to find their passion, whether that is Angus cattle, sports or another interest; set goals; and work hard to achieve them.

“You can get there through hard work,” Clint says. “Maybe you don’t have the best heifer. Just outwork others, and be willing to ask questions.”

Rachel concludes, “Kids are obviously the future of agriculture. I think you have to help and mold them and make them into the person they want to be, and help them to see their future.” **AJ**

*Editor’s Note: JoAnn Pipkin is a freelancer and cattlemaster from Republic, Mo.*



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