

# EAST TENNESSEE ANGUS

## *Serving Breeders Since 1918*



**F**or a small organization, East Tennessee Angus Association has made a large impact on the American Angus Association.

From its ranks have risen two national leaders — Joe Keefauver, who served as 1962 American Angus Association president, and Andy Starr, 1992 president. Serving on the Association Board of Directors have been Dr. Shelby Turner and currently Stan Watts, Murfreesboro. John Crouch, Association director of performance programs and a native of Jonesboro, Tenn., was also active in ETAA. Perhaps the most dedicated member was H.R. Duncan, a University of Tennessee animal science professor, Angus breeder,

performance pioneer and ETAA leader.

Many other breeders -both small and large -have benefitted and grown by being part of this organization over the years.

"The backbone of our organization has been the small breeder with 10 to 15 cows. They depend upon only the grass and maternal values of the Angus cow," says CC. Chamberlain, ETAA secretary-treasurer from Maryville, Tenn.

The ETAA will celebrate its 75th anniversary at a special banquet on Friday night, February 19. It will be held at Brehm Hall (animal science department building) at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. On Saturday, February 20, ETAA will conduct its

annual Angus show and sale, starting at 9:30 a.m. Approximately 70 head are entered in this event. The sale begins at noon.

### ***A Rich History***

East Tennessee has been home to Angus cattle since 1900. That was the year AH. Coleman of Mulberry Gap in Hancock County imported Angus seedstock from Iowa. Coleman registered 43 head during the next decade. He promoted and exhibited his new cattle at Jonesville, Virginia and other state fairs. About 1902 some Cornbelt breeders brought a carload of Angus cattle to Morristown and sold them at auction. Several East Tennessee breeders



*East Tennessee Angus Association leaders — (l to r): John Gamble, Clinton, past president; Andrew Starr, Sunbright, director; Sam Widener, Johnson City, director; Homer Stout, Piney Flats, director; Chuck Chamberlain, Maryville, secretary-treasurer; Robert Stinson, Talbot, director; A.L. Duckworth, Greeneville, director; Dwight King, Piney Flats, vice president; and Craig Robertson, Harrogate, president.*

Angus youth activities have been an important part of the East Tennessee Angus Association for 35 years. Pictured (l to r) at the 1992 Junior Angus Preview Show are Holly Gamble, Clinton; East Tennessee Angus Queen Staci Neas, Greeneville; and Fred Frazier, who served as judge.



purchased these animals. Their progeny were numerous and quite common in the area even into the 1920s.

From 1910 to 1922 the breeding of Angus cattle in East Tennessee made great strides when enthusiastic pioneer John Hitch came on the scene, along with H.R. Duncan and other Blount County breeders. Blount County soon had bragging rights to having "more Angus cattle than any other county south of the Ohio River."

Founded in 1918 to promote Angus cattle in the eastern Tennessee area, ETAA can count itself as one of the oldest regional Angus associations in the country. In the early days, much of the promotion of Angus cattle centered on the show and sale, which usually featured 45 to 55 females and four to five bulls.

With the development of production testing programs, a movement sparked by Professor Duncan in the '50s and early '60s a considerable amount of discussion went on about increasing the number of bulls and to require production test records. At first, the bulls were divided into show and production test categories. However, after several years it was decided that all bulls would have production test records and all would be shown. Thus, the ETAA became the first regional association in the United States to require production test records on its sale bulls.

At the same time, it actively promoted Angus bulls for crossbreeding. Through the efforts of association members, the resulting black-baldy calves were first included in some of the Angus feeder calf sales, providing an outlet for area commercial producers and increasing demand for Angus bulls.

### **East Tennessee Original**

It's only fitting that East Tennessee is honoring one of its most dedicated and progressive members, H.R. "Prof" Duncan, during its 75th anniversary year. Although he passed away in 1968, Professor Duncan's memory lives on with ETAA members.

Duncan was born on his family farm, "Duncan Woods," in Blount County in

1889, a farm settled by his great, great grandfather in 1778. He bought his first Angus in 1915 for \$125, a bull to use on commercial cows. Duncan became closely associated with John Hitch, J.T. Higgins of French Broad Farms, Tommy McCroskey and Tom Hitch of Blount County, along with many other Angus enthusiasts, and they founded East Tennessee Angus Association.

*"We have it in our breed to meet the changing demands of the consumer and beef producer. Let's meet this challenge."  
— H.R. Duncan,  
1968 ETAA sale.*

"Prof was a fountainhead of information on pedigrees, breeders and cattle production practices," Chamberlain says. "He never worried about show ring winnings or current pedigree fads. On the other hand, he would often point out third and fourth generations of females stemming from one highly productive cow. He believed in cow families, but they had to produce for him, under his conditions."

Duncan was into production testing before it became popular in the beef industry, Chamberlain says. Every calf on his Grainger County Angus farm was weighed at weaning time and again as a yearling. Cows were kept and/or culled based on these records. He even obtained carcass data on steers whenever possible.

This breeder's quest for sharing knowledge lives on in the Professor and Mrs. H.R. Duncan Angus Scholarship. This \$10,000 scholarship is awarded to a worthy University of Tennessee student.

### **Youth Comes First**

During its history, ETAA has always promoted its youth and junior activities. At first it provided a \$50 certificate to the exhibitor of the champion Angus steer in the area junior steer shows. This certificate could be applied to the purchase of any breeding animal in any ETAA sale. This program was created with the idea of encouraging juniors to get involved with Angus breeding cattle. With the advent of crossbreeding and difficulty of determining the origin of steers, the ETAA soon dropped the program.

To replace it and carry on youth support, the ETAA now gives a \$50 check to the owner/exhibitor of the champion Angus heifer at the four junior heifers shows in the area. Almost from the start of the junior heifer shows, the ETAA has made available in its February sale and show a group of potential show heifers eligible for the juniors shows of that year.

The ETAA also supports scholarships for the University of Tennessee livestock judging team and contributes to the Angus fund at the Junior Livestock Expo in Nashville each year.

Starting in 1992, the East Tennessee Angus Auxiliary began offering a \$500 scholarship to a qualifying high school senior. The auxiliary also sponsors the East Tennessee Angus Queen.

**Editor's note:** Special thanks goes to Dr. C.C. "Chuck" Chamberlain who contributed material for this article and serves as a humble historian for the East Tennessee Angus Association.

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