

Hoosier Hospitality

Indiana Angus members to host preconvention tour Nov. 4.

by *Shauna Rose Hermel, editor*

Members of the Indiana Angus Association will host a preconvention tour Friday, Nov. 4, prior to the official start of the 2016 Angus Convention slated for Nov. 5-7 in Indianapolis, Ind.

“The National Angus Tour is an opportunity for Angus producers all over the country to come in and see how we do things here in the Midwest, here in Indiana,” says Clint Coverdale of Coverdale Angus, host of the tour’s final stop near Frankton, Ind. Participants, he adds, will get to meet people from all over the country, share ideas and experiences, and “see how we do things here in the Corn Belt.”

Indiana is as competitive with Angus cattle as anywhere in the country, says Ted Willer of Willer Timber Ridge, Greencastle, Ind., host of one of the day’s farm stops.

“We have show cattle, and we have performance cattle,” he explains of the state’s cow herd, adding that the cattle have to

perform in a tough environment. Temperatures in Indiana can range from –20° F in the winter to more than 100° in the summer, with humidity that can reach 90% in August. In addition, cattle have to eat fescue and deal with the mud inherent to the Midwest.

If the genetics can perform in Indiana, says Willer, they can perform anywhere.

In addition to the cattle, guests will be able to learn about the variety of feed resources used in the state, says Andrew Stewart, manager of Stewart Select Angus and a tour stop host. From cornstalks to baleage to dried distillers’ grains, the state has access to many byproducts of the grain industry to help lower cow production costs.

Merck Animal Health will sponsor lunch at the Stewart family’s seed plant at Greensburg, Ind. Tour-goers will be able to tour the facility to see how seed corn and beans are packaged and distributed for planting the following year.

What would a trip to Indiana be without a little basketball? Visitors may recognize the interior of The Hoosier Gym, built by the Knightstown Community in 1921 to ensure its youth had access to a physical education. In 1985, it became the home to the Hickory Huskers for the movie *Hoosiers*, starring Gene Hackman as Coach Norman Dale.

Tour buses will depart from the Indianapolis Marriott Downtown on Friday morning, Nov. 4, and return tour-goers to the hotel that evening. A full lunch, plus drinks and morning and afternoon snacks are included.

The National Angus Tour is a ticketed event that requires advance registration of \$75 to ride a tour bus or \$40 to drive yourself. Attendees can reserve their spot when registering for the Angus Convention at www.angusconvention.com.

More details on each farm stop follow.



PHOTOS BY JOSH COMINELLIS



Willer Timber Ridge, Greencastle, Ind.

Ted and Kathy Willer and their son Josh will welcome tour participants to Willer Timber Ridge near Greencastle, Ind. The 325-acre family farm is home to 100 head of Angus cows.

“We’re really a performance cattle program,” explains Ted. “We’re trying to raise bulls, and we make bull-maker moms that will hopefully produce those bulls for us on a consistent basis.”

With the goal of producing a good steak for a positive consumer eating experience, balanced carcass cattle are also a priority.

After enjoying being a participant in tours across the country, Ted says he’s excited to open their farm to the National Angus Tour. “This is a chance for us to show off a little bit of what we’ve done and share that back with the people like they’ve shared their place with us in the past.”

The Willers have a long history in collecting ultrasound data to gather carcass information on their herd, and they have recently started DNA-profiling. All sale bulls, including those tested at the Midland Bull Test in Montana and the Indiana Beef Evaluation Program in Bedford, Ind., are DNA-tested, as are bulls sold at home.

“This herd started out with a lot of Pathfinder® cows that were 8 to 12 to 13 years old,” he says, adding that 50% of the herd traces its lineage back to four of those cows. Visitors will discover a performance herd with good conformation, a good set of feet, good udders, longevity and a lot of consistency, says Ted.



Stewart Select Angus, Greensburg, Ind.

Stewart Select Angus was started in 1954 with the purchase of 34 pairs of registered-Angus to graze the farm's rough, wooded ground. Though started with a showring emphasis, performance has been the focus for the past 20 years, says manager Andrew Stewart, the third generation to raise Angus cattle on the Greensburg, Ind., farm.

"We try to measure everything and really be a benefit to the commercial breeders here in Indiana and surrounding states, giving them good calving-ease genetics that still have good growth and carcass traits to help them be profitable for their operations," he says.

One of the largest Angus herds in the state, Stewart Select Angus calves about 200 Angus females each year. Bull progeny are performance-tested and sold through the Midland Bull Test and the Indiana Beef Evaluation Program, and the farm hosted its first bull sale in April 2016.

Stewart says he is looking forward to showcasing the strength of the cow herd.

"We are really trying to focus on those females and making sure that they have plenty of capacity to survive," he says, noting that every cow on the farm has to produce a calf every year. "We try not to let anyone just have a free ride here. We're making sure that these genetics that we're using continue to produce year in and year out."

Stewart Select Angus utilizes the Association's Angus Information Management Software (AIMS) to keep the records on the cow herd, and they have enrolled the herd in MaternalPlus®.

"The breeder has to submit a little bit more information, but in turn they get some data back to help them evaluate their herd to help them make decisions to achieve their goals," Stewart says.



Coverdale Angus, Frankton, Ind.

Coverdale Angus is a family-owned cattle farm in central Indiana. The Coverdales have raised cattle for four generations. They emphasize the registered business at the farm purchased near Frankton about 10 years ago, explains Ron Coverdale, manager of the operation.

Why Angus? Ron notes they tried a little bit of everything, but they just kept coming back to the Angus cow.

"The Angus cow is just phenomenal — hard to beat," he says. Currently, they graze about 90 head of Angus cows at the Frankton farm.

"We are concentrating on not only show cattle but performance cattle," says Ron. "We'd like to have cattle that are phenotypically good and also have some EPDs (expected progeny differences) behind them."

"Being a part of the National Angus Tour is a great opportunity for us to have people in from all over the country, kind of increase our exposure to the herd a little and get a chance to meet a lot of people from all over and see how they do things," says Clint Coverdale, who manages the farm's herd health and breeding program.

"Here in Indiana, we don't rely as much on the high-quality pastures as the guys out West might use," he says. "We rely more on corn because that's where we're from and that's what we've got readily available."

"We are concentrating a lot of cattle on a smaller acreage," adds Ron, "with a lot of rotational grazing and things like that." The practice has helped considerably in increasing production and stocking capacity.

