

Breed Better Animals, Angus Men Told

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cient bulls whether all his customers are demanding them or not, according to George Strathearn, a commercial cattleman and manager of the Grand National Livestock Show at the Cow Palace in San Francisco. Strathearn also said that in selecting for increased size muscling must not be overlooked. "Those long, narrow light-muscled cattle won't help the Angus breed," he said, "and waiting for a bull to grow into a heavily muscled animal at two or three years of age is no good. Muscle is muscle and cattle have to be born with it. If a bull isn't the right kind at service age it isn't likely that the

steers he produces will be the right kind at slaughter age." Both Olsen and Dillard Bryce, Big Timber, Montana, emphasized the need for proper culling with the help of production records. "We eliminate most of our poor producing cattle after they have weaned their first calf," Bryce explained. "Sometimes if the records show that a heifer is from a top producing line she will get a second chance, but any animal that doesn't come through by the time she has had her second calf is culled."

The fourth panel member was Kenneth Haines, Union Springs, Alabama. "The commercial breeders in our state

are looking for more size and stretch in their cattle and many are willing to pay for it. Commercial breeders will pay from \$600 to \$1000 for the right kind of bulls," he concluded.

Management efficiency and proper use of production records were studied at George Fox's Rafter F Ranch near Cambridge, Kansas. Fox told how rigid culling with the help of AHIR records has helped him breed better cattle.

"We cull the bottom 15 to 20 per cent of our cows every year on production," Fox said. "This has helped us increase average weaning weights by 10 per cent or more since we started using records, and we now get better

than a 90 per cent calf crop running under practical range conditions."

While Fox runs registered cows more like commercials, the Bill Barnett herd near Bowling, Oklahoma, the next stop on the Tour, was just the opposite. He makes his living solely from 200 head of commercial cows and runs them much like a registered herd. He shoots for both top pay weights and premium prices. His cows are chained and he keeps complete production records on the herd and has for years.

The cows trace back to the famous John Kilbie herd that was also bred for top production with the help of records.

His calves average 550 pounds pay weight, and many top 600 pounds. He uses only production tested bulls. One of the newest came from Bob Hartley's Spui Ranch at Vinita, Oklahoma, which was the next tour stop.

Hartley, through the use of records and a comprehensive breeding and selection program, has been able to increase weaning weights on his registered cattle an average of 50 pounds a calf since 1960 and has boosted his average bull test gains from 25 to 35 pounds per day up to 35 to even 40 pounds per day. At the ranch the crowd studied a set of 1,100 to 1,200 pound cows from each of three herd bulls as well as 1,000-pound two-year-old heifers and 700 to 900-pound yearling heifers whose weaning weights ranged from 450 to 579 pounds.

At beautiful Island Farms the largest crowd of the Tour studied the herd and in particular a bull that is being tested now as a potential certified meat sire. They also participated in a unique "Seven Steps to Angus Progress" demonstration that covered all phases of beef cattle management from production records and classification to meats judging to freeze branding for identification.

Emphasizing that no cattleman can be successful without also being a top judge of Angus type, was the National Angus Judging Seminar.

The importance of this portion of the program, however, was to make an in depth study of beef cattle judging. Each judge had to defend his placings in the five classes of heifers and bulls and at times the consensus of the crowd didn't agree with the consensus of the official judges. An important point that emerged from the discussion was that both the crowd and judges saw the cattle alike and recognized the same weaknesses and strong points. Because of their individual preferences, however, they placed them differently in class.

Both the crowd and the officials did indicate preference for longer, taller cattle that showed plenty of growth potential. It strongly demonstrated that judging is only one man's opinion, that it is not the final word, but should be used as just another guide to herd improvement and promotion.

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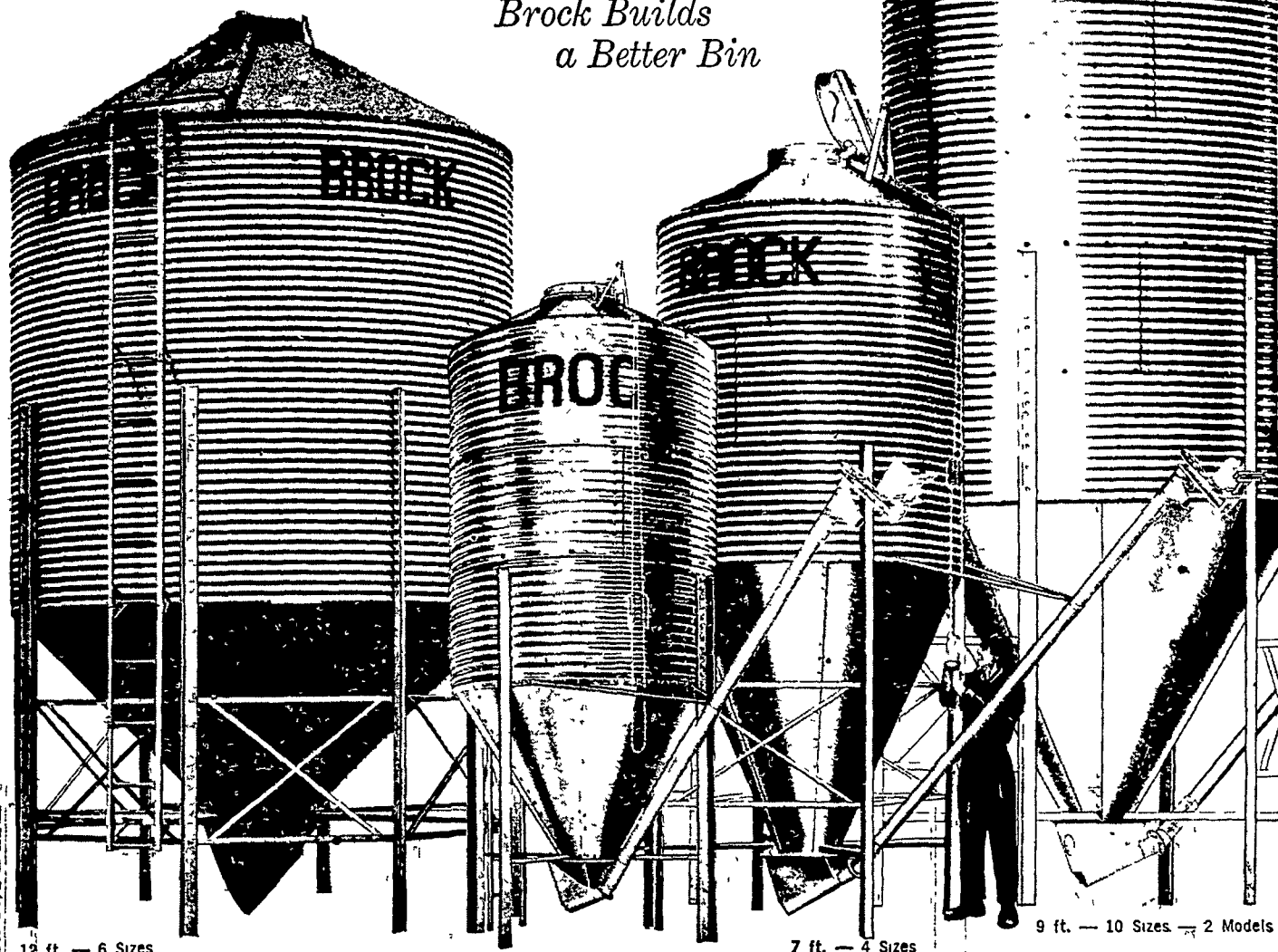
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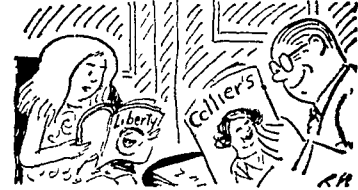
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