

Holloway leads South Branch Angus to winner's circle

BY JOYCE BUPP
Staff Correspondent

YORK — When it comes to comparing beef cattle, don't talk rate of gain to Bill Holloway. Talk efficiency.

"Efficiency—that's the bottom line," says Holloway, manager of South Branch Farms, R8 York.

Under Bill Holloway's direction, South Branch Farms Angus has become a name to command respect on the Eastern beef show circuit. That success is a tribute to the inherent beef "sense" of the affable Holloway, and to the faith that farm owner Robert Kinsley has put in his farm manager's judgement.

Born and raised in Darlington, Maryland, a farming community in northern Harford County, Bill and his three brothers and sister all had chores on the family's beef and grain farm.

Following a stretch in the military, including a tour of Formosa as an Army cryptographer, Bill returned to the home farm. While all the brothers wanted to stay in the farming business, there just wasn't enough farm to go around to all four.

So Bill struck out on his own, answering an ad in Lancaster Farming that landed him the job managing Crebilly Farm in Chester County. He was there for nearly twenty years, building and improving the beef herd of the Robinson family, associated with the Acme Market food chains.

Then, about five years ago, Bill was offered the job as farm manager at South Branch. The Kinsley beef operation had only been in business for a few years when Holloway took over the management reins. A herd sire was run with most of the breeding females, with some artificial insemination done on the top purebred cows.

Pleased with the calves from the herd sire, Bill followed his intuition. He felt the big, powerful Angus bull needed a "fair chance" to show what his genetics could do in improving on the very best individuals of the South Branch breeding herd. So, this son of Anconia Dynamo, bred by Sayre Farms of Phelps, New York, was run in with the "pick" of South Branch.

Holloway's confidence paid off, as the bull lived up to expectations. His son, SBF Dynamo's Pride, is now the senior herd sire, typey, long, with a powerful front end, and running on well-set legs and feet.

In 1980, before he was quite a year old, the young bull walked out of the show ring at the Farm Show with the grand champion banner. In '81, he replayed the win all over again.

In between, Dynamo's Pride also took champion honors at the Maryland State Fair. He came back this year as reserve winner. And, the past two years of the York Fair, he won the Supreme Champion banners for the South Branch trophy collection. For the past two show seasons at both Maryland and the Farm Show, he was part of the winning best six, and get of sire.

His half sister recently topped the all-breed consignments to the Penn State Ag Arena sale, selling for \$3,000 to Genetics Unlimited.

This herd's winning ways don't stop with bulls. A South Branch January '81 heifer, SBF Queen 123, won the calf championship at York, took the reserve spot at Maryland, and was part of the winning junior get at Timonium as well.

Although these two top show ring contenders, Holloway will load seven other purebreds up for the trip to Harrisburg. That'll include another heifer calf, and a half-dozen bred heifers.

South Branch maintains a breeding herd of about one hundred cows, with 15 replacement heifers. The majority of the calves are from Dynamo's Pride, and by the junior herd sire, although artificial insemination is used occasionally to keep fresh blood lines in the herd.

That young Angus bull used in the South Branch A.I. program, is a three-quarter brother to Powerplay, the noted Penn State purebred that won the Futurity Championship at the Louisville International. Powerplay gained notoriety as the tallest, longest, heaviest Angus bull on record at the time his mature vital statistics were checked.

"I don't believe in pampering cattle," emphasizes Holloway when he talks cow care.

The show ring eats the same basic feed augured out to the feedlot groups, silage, ground ear corn, and oats, plus a bit of protein supplement. Sold on roughages, Holloway is a firm believer in hay feeding, and of year-round pasturing.

Size alone won't guarantee a purebred black cow a permanent place in this herd. She's got to mother, milk and be able to hoof it back and forth easily across the rolling contours of the ranch-like farm.

"I won't give up femininity and correctness for size," is another of Holloway's beef philosophies. "If she can't take pasturing along with old age, I don't want her."

Convinced that heredity plays a big role in calf gain and longevity of cows, Holloway is a critical culler. and, any lone cow, unless there's a solid reason why she doesn't have a calf by her side, goes out the lane.

Although beef animals sometimes have a reputation for being skittish and somewhat unfriendly, South Branch animals are downright sociable. Not only the breeding herd but the some 250 feeders as well seem gentle, calm, and exhibit a lively curiosity about poking their heads over the fence to observe visitors.

But again, that's a tribute to the kind of man that Bill Holloway is. He'll tolerate nothing less than gentle handling of the big black cows and calves, and frowns on any screaming, stomping, "or unnecessary chasing of the herd.

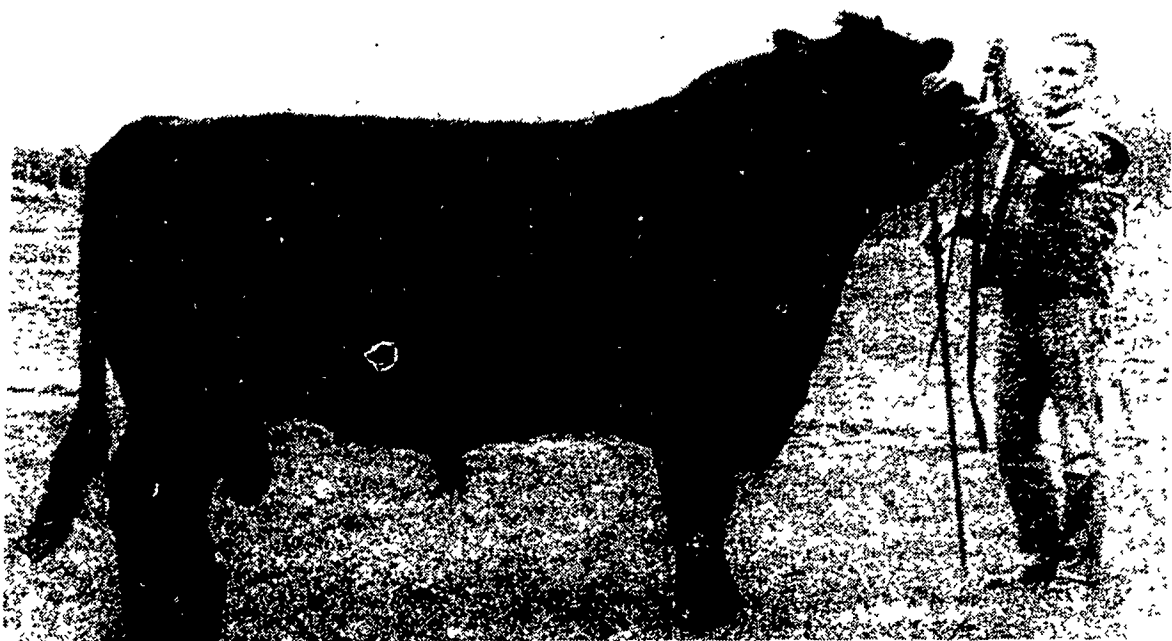
But he's quick with abundant praise for his farm assistant, Nevin Amspacher, who's just as devoted to the Angus as is Holloway, and a crackerjack farm machine operator and mechanic.

Holloway also gets a hand from owner Kinsley's sons, Tim and Chris. Both young men are accomplished 4-H beef exhibitors, and regularly help with the cattle work, plus summer field chores.

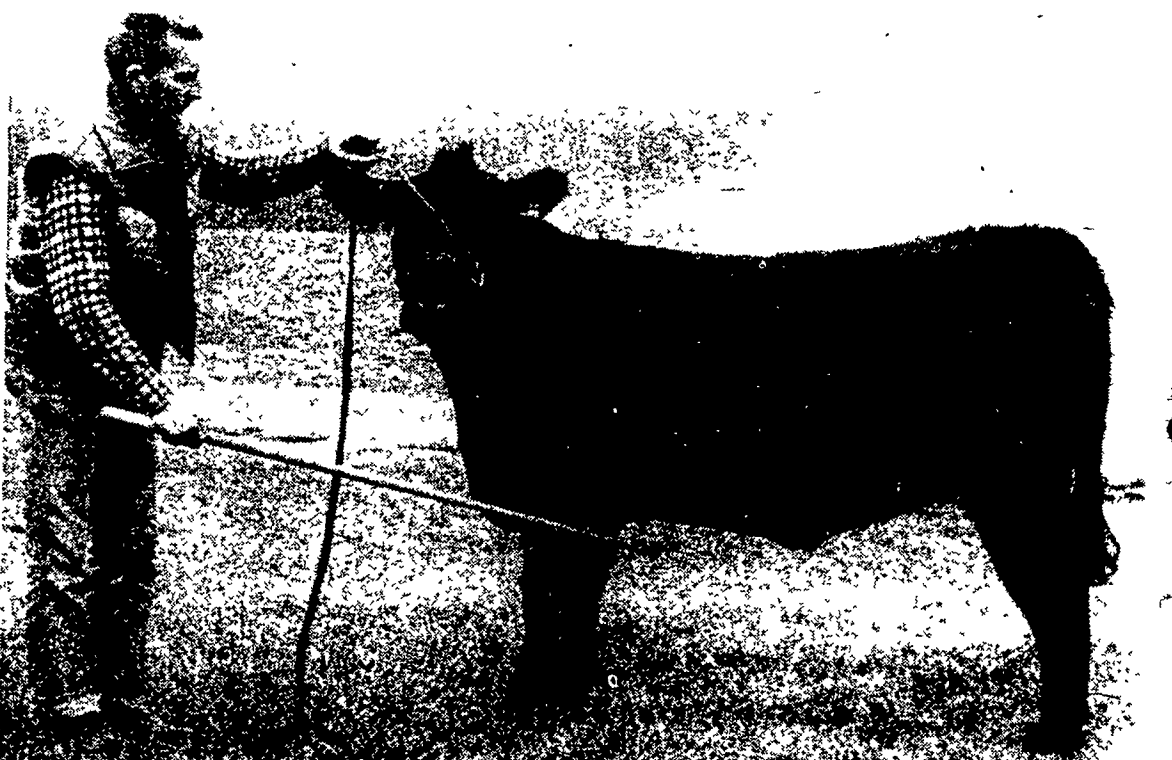
Holloway and Amspacher handle the machine work of cropping nearly a thousand acres, about half of that in corn. Bulk of the yields goes to feed the breeding herd and feeders, with some grain for the market. A no-till enthusiast, Holloway says he'd crop every corn acre that method if "it wasn't for Johnsongrass."

An oats crop also goes in, enough to feed the cattle, and some 80 acres of hay, alfalfa and orchardgrass mixed, goes through the baler.

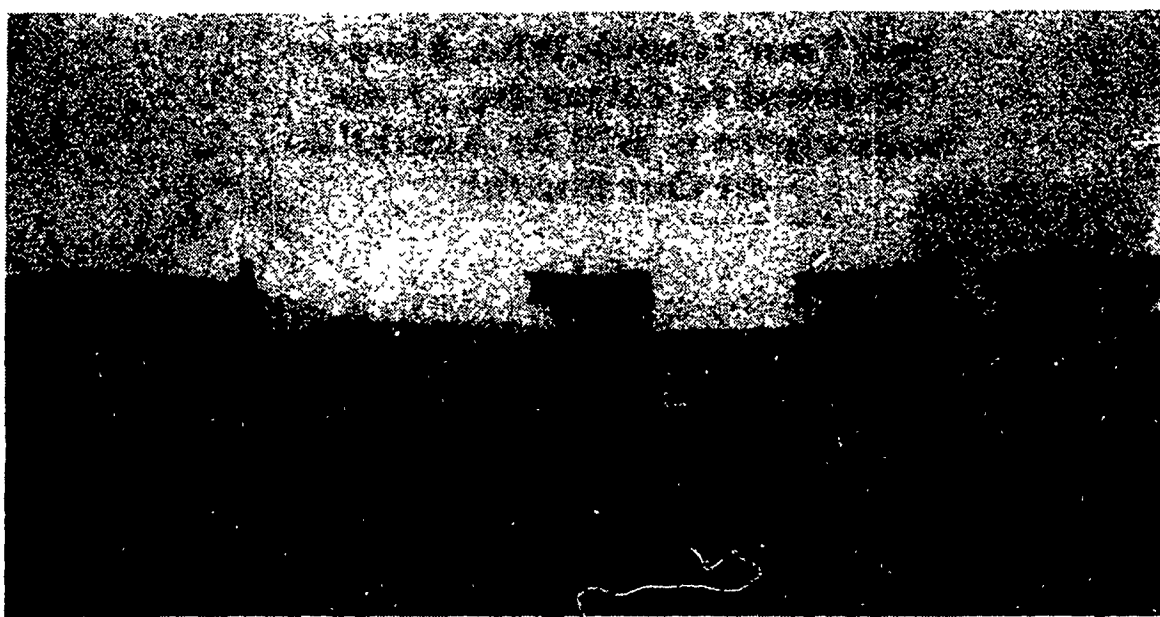
A neat row of large round bales scallops the edge of one field just



SBF Dynamo's Pride, Farm Show champion Angus bull for the past two years, heads up the show ring at Harrisburg this week for South Branch Farms. At the halter is farm manager Bill Holloway.



Bill Holloway gives a posing lesson to one of the farm's top heifers, SBF Queen 123, a top winner at the 1981 Maryland State Fair and the York Fair.



As the dusk of a late winter afternoon settles over South Branch's rolling pastures, Bill Holloway calls in the Angus herd for their evening feeding.

beyond the farm buildings, an experiment in putting up corn stalks for feed and bedding.

After the initial experiment with a rented machine, Holloway says he's pleased with the way the big bales turned out, and bedding the beef simply amounts to hauling a bale into the cattle and unrolling it.

Best bales go for feed, and the Angus "devour it", attests Holloway. He sees the baled stalks

as a stretcher to silage feeds, plus one more benefit of corn ground.

With more than two-dozen years of beef-breeding management to back him up, Holloway remains totally sold on the efficiency and temperament of the purebred Angus. He also gives high points to the "Black Baldy" crossbreds, Angus X Hereford, that fill part of the feedlots.

Growth and gain records, and

what's more important, a stack of past sales slips, tell Holloway he'll likely see best market prices from the Angus, and the white-faced blacks.

But, in keeping with the changing market demand for leaner beef, Holloway never rules out on-going experiments with other crosses, and he's tried and

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