

## Stewardship Winner

ST. JOSEPH, Mo. — Ralph and Henis Veenema, owners of ShiRaLoKen Farm, Deposit, New York, were named the Eastern regional winner of the 1992 Land Stewardship Award presented by the Angus Journal, official publication of the American Angus Association.

ShiRaLoKen Farm is a 250-head Angus operation utilizing 1,165 acres of hillside land on the western fringe of the Catskill Mountains. The farm consists of 110 acres of cropland, 690 acres of pasture and 365 acres of woodland.

The Veenemas purchased the farm in 1969, after the land had been neglected for five years. Their first step was to reclaim and renovate the land of an abandoned farm. With help from the Soil and Water Conservation District, Ralph planned the crop and pasture fields.

By 1977, all the potential pastures had been fenced in, and he decided to concentrate on improving the cropland. The first step was drainage, both surface and subsurface.

To utilize his resources, he used some of his drainage projects to supply a better defined water source for cattle in pastures far from streams.

The farm's wise use of fencing makes working and moving cattle easy. Cattle can easily be moved to different pastures, separated for veterinarian work or loaded on trailers for transport.

After much research on pasture rotation and attending seminars on conservation, a decision was made to divide 318 acres of pasture into seven paddocks for short-duration grazing.

This change fits in well with the Veenemas' strive for efficiency. It eliminates much of the time formerly spent brushhogging the pastures and lets the cattle do that work. By restricting the range of the cattle, they make more efficient use of all available forage in the paddock. When the grass is grazed down to 2 or 3 inches in height, the cattle are moved to another paddock. This allows the previous one to recuperate.

Over the past 15 years, ShiRaLoKen Farm has installed many conservation practices from barnyard water management to conservation tillage. But Ralph feels that rotational grazing will pay the most dividends.

They have also implemented 14 acres of stripcropping, 74 acres of conservation tillage and 26 acres of permanent vegetative cover.

The Veenemas and manager John Butler received the 1990 Delaware County Conservation Farm Award for their extensive conservation management practices.

Ralph and Henis Veenema were featured in the 1992 Herd Reference Edition of the Angus Journal. Other recognized winners included: (West) Tom Elliott, N-Bar Land and Cattle Co., Grass Range, Montana; (Central) Bruce and Scott Foster, Seldom Rest Farms, Niles, Michigan; and (South) W.B. Herrington, Bilmar Angus Farms, Mt. Calm, Texas.

The Angus Journal presents the Land Stewardship Award annually to four regional winners who have demonstrated wise use of resources and conservation practices.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The National Cattlemen's Association recently hosted an unprecedented, producer-to-producer meeting between dairy and beef producers during its midyear meeting to initiate better communications on issues of mutual interest.

"The meeting was very successful," said NCA Agriculture Policy Committee Chairman Bob Drake, Davis Okla. "Both dairy and beef producers understand they represent different constituencies with sometimes different philosophies towards policy solution. However, we agreed that it is important to discuss these issues in some forum so that we can continue the communications to better work on those issues together."

Drake said that the meeting served to break the ice on a lack of communication that had developed in recent years. After sever-

al meetings between the NCA and National Milk Producers Federation officers, the idea of a roundtable evolved through the desire of NCA producer leaders to organize a meeting to develop a better understanding of dairymen's concerns.

The unstructured meeting spurred discussion on upcoming issues such as wetlands, endangered species, clean water, food safety and animal health regulations. It was unanimous that agriculture must work together and speak with one voice in Washington, D.C. The group identified producer-to-producer meetings as the best way to improve communications.

"The group decided that despite differences between the two industries, we would meet in the future to try and understand the other's point of view," Drake said.

"We also agreed that we would not use differences of philosophy as issues to generate membership."

Dairymen at the meeting said they agreed that it was a good first step. "We hit a home run on the first pitch," commented one participant. Other dairy producers said they hoped that cattlemen heard and understood that dairymen want to work with beef producers.

There was also discussion on ways to spur communications between the two industries at the local level.

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