

# Former Junior National Showman Sees Dream Come True

**LINDA WILLIAMS**  
 Bedford Co. Correspondent  
**BREEZEWOOD** (Bedford Co.)  
 — Sam Wylie always knew he wanted to make his living with cattle.

He knew it as far back as standing in the ring at the first National Junior Angus Showman in Kentucky as a teenager. He knew it as the ribbons and trophies piled up and the news clippings and special photos made their way into frames.

Thing is, he wasn't sure how! "I tried the show circuit for a long time," Wylie says. "I showed cattle, traveled all over the country showing for others, grooming and trimming hooves. But it wasn't what I wanted to do forever."

Certain that the American farmer had it all wrong, Wylie began to study farming methods in countries such as those Down Under.

"The problem I have with farming as the Americans do it today is that they plant, cultivate and harvest their crops; haul the food into the animals; then haul the manure back out."

Wylie began taking a holistic management approach for his black angus herd. This ecologically sound production model is based on the land feeding the cattle and the stock's waste nutrients recycling and feeding the land.

Needing more land, he found it at a reasonable price in the quiet valley of Clearville where he bought 153 acres and rents a second farm of similar size. "I also utilize some other grassland in the area to make round bales for winter feed," he says.

"I had this picture in my mind," Wylie smiles. "Black cows in green grass. That's a pretty sight. I needed a stock farm with an above average house and land that was at least 80% usable. I knew I could beef up any barn."

Now as springtime arrives in this Pennsylvania Valley, Octoraro Angus is providing the answer to those early dreams of Wylie's. Fifty coal black calves are on the ground and another 20 or more expected to drop any day.

Wylie named his new place Octoraro Angus, after a creek that divides southern Chester and Lancaster County, where he farmed prior to moving to Bedford County in 1988.

"It's taken 25 years to get to the point where I am now," admits Octoraro's owner. "It's been done with no fads, no frills, only years of sound line-breeding and selection practices based on 'pure,' breeder traits longevity, reproductive efficiency, balanced EPD's and the traditional Angus qualities of which the breed was founded."

Wylie says his cattle have passed the test for being efficient.

Even a winter as tough as the one just experienced was not hard on cattle bred tough enough to take it. "That's been my idea," Wylie assures. "To have cattle that provide a balance of true lasting genetic value along with the ability to thrive on a low-input intensive grazing program."

The cattle are confined to their lush paddocks with an efficient spring loaded fencing system and there is very little trouble with cattle breaking loose. A solar energizer is used for maximum control of cattle on the rental farm.

As Sam surveys the green hills surrounding his one time over-worked farm, he sees green grass now thriving. Grass he has carefully cultivated to include such nourishing plants as puma, chicory, clover, and other cool season grasses. "I try to get plants started that have deep roots," he says. "That way they bring the nutrients buried deep in the earth to the surface. And, they also survive summer droughts."

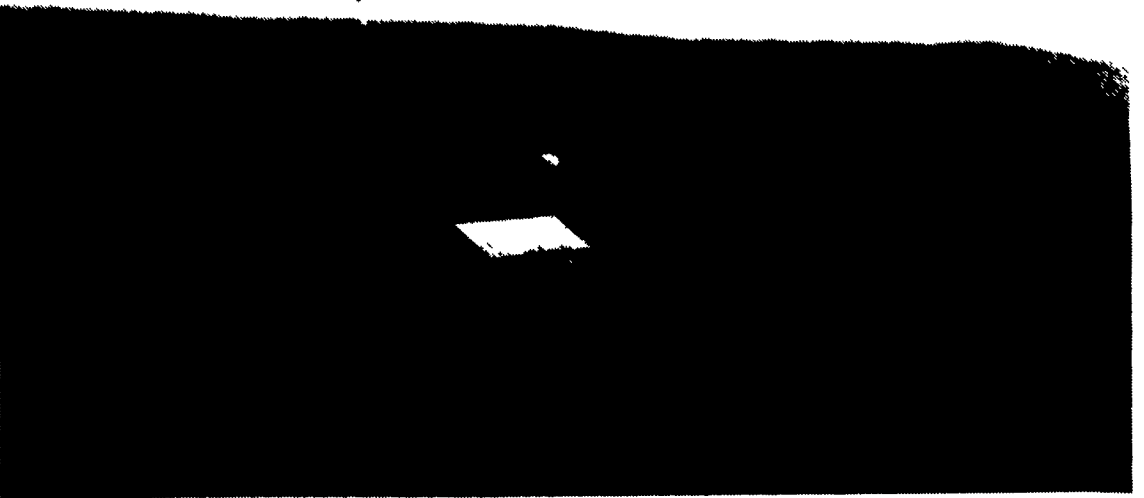
With his time tested gene pool in line and cattle adaptable enough to survive well on grazing, Sam did a headcount and realized he was becoming overpopulated. "I like them all," he admits, smiling broadly, "but shucks, I can't keep all of them forever."

For this reason, Wylie has also taken a modern approach to marketing with a day of entertainment, fellowship and selling planned for Saturday, May 14. There will be speakers on intensive grazing management and certified Angus beef.

An advance catalogue will show such offerings as the high indexing heifer from the '93 calf drop; an extension out of a stacker out of a viking which is strictly foundation genetics.

Wylie also plans to offer 20 cow calf pairs from the heart of the herd along with fall calving cows and bulls.

Planning ahead, Wylie has set



A view of the Wylie Octoraro Angus farm taken from one of the grazing pastures.

starting prices on each lot to be made available on sale day. No cattle will be sold for less than the starting price. Cattle will be available for inspection anytime prior to 12:30 p.m. on sale day. There will not be a traditional sales ring.

Providing a balance for the sale will be a table of refreshments including "angus," hot dogs. "Not black," laughs Wylie, "just made from angus beef."

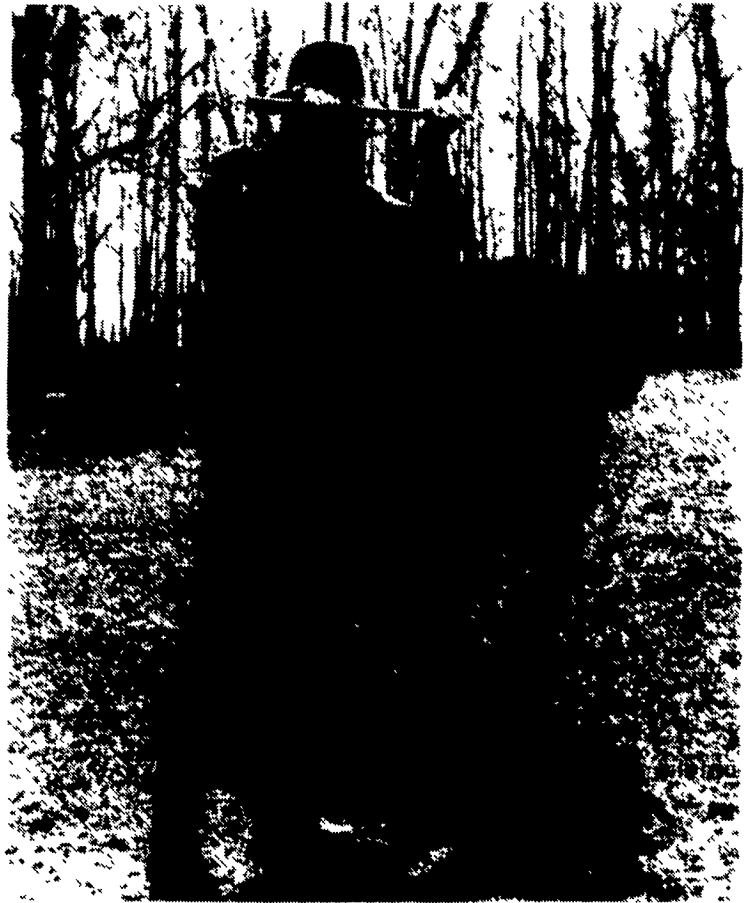
Two speakers will also be available to provide information for prospective buyers including Tom Calvert talking on "Introduction To Intensive Grazing Management," and Bill Wylie, "Evolution of Production Genetics to Consumer Oriented Genetics".

"By doing this," admits Sam, "I hope to educate those 'would be' farmers of the future on the ways of line breeding of grazing. By doing this, I'm building my own customers."

Future plans also include a new watering system instituted by the Bay project which should be as maintenance free as the rest of the farm.

"When that happens, I will even be able to get a few weekends free," Sam Wylie says.

His dream is fast becoming a total reality.



Sam Wylie weighs one of his Black Angus calves in a routine check on the Wylie farm located in Bedford County.

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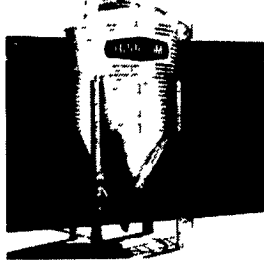
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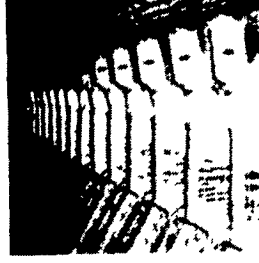
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