

Beef Association 'User's Group' To Provide Education, Representation

ANDY ANDREWS

Lancaster Farming Staff

PEACH BOTTOM (Lancaster Co.) — People who own computers often belong to a "user's group." Bobbi McMullen wants southeastern Pennsylvania beef producers to know there is a "user's group" for them, too.

Recently, the Southeast Regional Cattleman's Association was organized to "help the small producers out. We want to attract the feeders, the cow-calf people" and others associated in any way with the rapidly growing beef industry, said McMullen, who is secretary-treasurer.

As a result, the meeting of the associate, a 100 percent affiliate of the Pennsylvania Cattleman's Association, will be held Thursday, Nov. 17, at 6:30 p.m. at the Hoss's Steak House, Rt. 100 and 113, in Lionville, Chester County. (See related story this issue.)

During a recent interview with *Lancaster Farming* at her farm, Wakefield Angus in Peach Bottom, McMullen spoke about what the intent and focus of the group will be to those who work in the beef industry.

The organization, she said, was started to help the small producers.

"There're a lot of people who have a few cow/calves in the backyard, breeding their own kids' 4-H steers, that type of thing, that haven't the foggiest idea," she said, about how to properly raise and care for beef animals.

As a result, based on her experiences with people who "helped me along the way," the group was molded after the by-laws of the Berks County Cattleman's Association. "They told us what to do

and how to do it," said McMullen.

One of the ways the association will help producers is by distributing information about the National Cattleman's Association Beef Quality Assurance Program next spring. The program teaches feeders and cow-calf producers how to properly vaccinate beef animals.

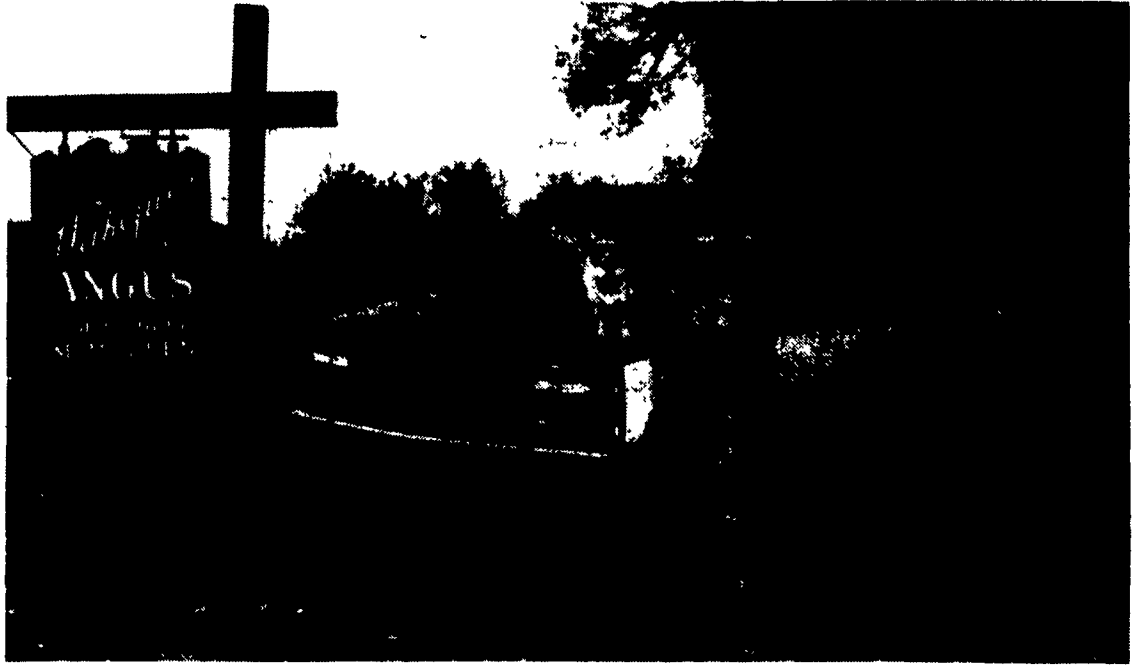
"For years, we've always given vaccinations on a beef animal in the rump," she said. "But that's your top round, that's where your best meat is."

The meat from any producer's animal will end up in some way, whether as a cow or steer, in McDonald's hamburgers or steak served at home or in restaurants, according to McMullen. Producers must understand that the site of the injection damage often results in a pocket of permanent scar tissue or infection. "That ruins the cut of meat," she said.

What is surprising is that for many years, horse breeders routinely injected in the neck because of the heavily muscled rump on a horse. What took beef producers so long to catch on?

Many times, according to McMullen, producers will switch from rump to neck injections on older cattle. The cattle become used to the rump injections and often react to the change in site. But moving to a neck injection insures that little or no meat can suffer from possible injection site damage.

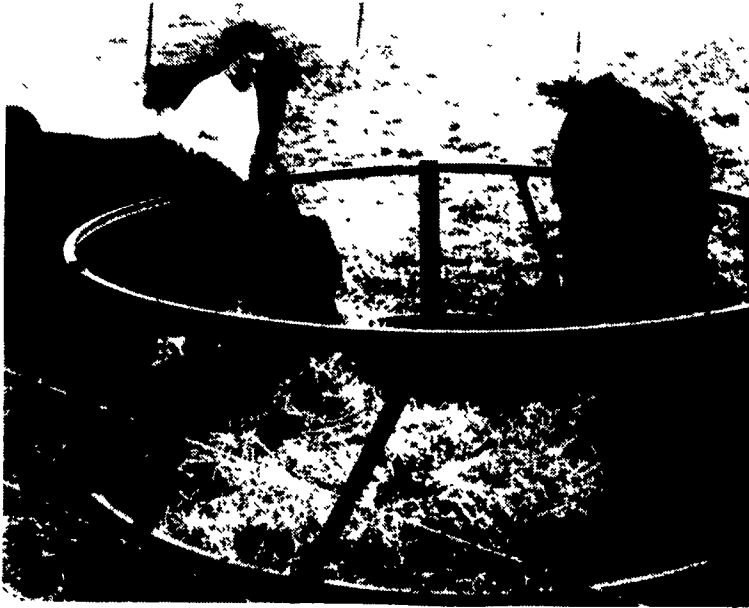
The efforts of the regional group will focus in on how to weather the price changes (which affect all segments of the beef industry) to often negative reports provided by the press about the industry. McMullen points out the recent



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McMullen recently purchased a new computer to help with registration information and to conduct business as secretary and treasurer of the association. She uses it to keep track of the genetics of the herd.



At their farm, Bobbi manages a herd begun about 11 years ago with a cow/calf purchased at their former farm in Oxford. She continues to expand the herd.



Edna, a Feb. 1993 daughter out of the Krueger Foolish Pride dam and Differential Bull, could be a promising addition to further increase the viability of the stock.

story on national TV over the bacterial contamination of meat, and said that "us producers are the ones that hurt in the end."

The association will provide the necessary education and representation so vital to the continuance of the industry in this part of the region.

Already, the group has signed up 23 members from southern Lancaster and Chester counties. The group includes one cow/calf operation from Maryland. But the

association remains open to producers throughout all of Lancaster and welcomes all types of breeds and variety of producer farms and beef-related enterprises.

The association will meet once a year in November. But throughout the year the association will host field days at member farms and provide other educational activities.

"We're trying very hard to focus on the youth," she said. "If you read all the statistics, the average age of the farmer keeps getting older and older. And if we don't keep the youth involved and the youth interested, we're not going to have any farmers in the future."

McMullen also serves as secretary of the Atlantic National Angus Foundation, which hosts one of the largest Angus Shows around on Memorial Day Weekend at the Timonium Fairgrounds in Timonium, Md.

Bobbi and her husband, Joe, own and operate the Wakefield Angus Farm just off 222 north of Peach Bottom. There, they maintain 60 acres (nearly all rotationally grazed) for their purebred registered Angus cow/calf herd, of which they are calving 14. They purchased the farm two years ago.

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One such calf, Edna, a Feb. 1993 daughter out of the Krueger

Foolish Pride dam and Differential Bull, could be a promising addition to further increase the viability of the stock.

McMullen consigns two bulls every year to the state Meat Evaluation Center Performance Testing Bull program. This year, they had the top indexing bull over all breeds and the highest selling Angus bull. She has been consigning bulls to that sale the past eight years.

Other bulls are sold to breeders in various locations. All are registered Angus sales.

McMullen said she continues to market as many bulls as she can.

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She uses all AI on the herd. "We're trying to breed for what we consider 'balance' EPDs," said McMullen. Those include moderate birth weight, high weaning weight, high yearling weight, and moderate on milk.

In the meantime, McMullen continues to refurbish the farmstead (including the 200-year-old stone house) and improve the operation.

This week, construction began on 1,500 feet of streambank fencing, including an 18-foot cattle