

# Md. Teen Crowned Miss American Angus

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ary, who runs the contest, sets the guidelines for the queen's year.

When she won the contest, Cortney received a scrapbook which she will fill out and return to the national auxiliary. Angus operations across the country donate items for her position, which include bracelets, a belt buckle, watch, luggage, and wardrobe and travel allowance.

## A Surprise

Her appointment to the position was a bit of a surprise to her family.

Her parents had spent the afternoon of the coronation shopping for waterers and a trailer, and arrived almost too late to hear the announcement, which happened just before the last class.

Prior to the announcement Cortney's parents were, in fact, out in a packed hallway — the arena was full of people waiting to hear the announcement. They ran out the door and around the building just in time to hear their daughter's name called as the new Miss American Angus.

Hill and Dukehart laughingly recall that they had already checked out of the hotel, packed the truck, and did not buy tickets for the banquet, as they planned on driving through the night to allow Cortney to attend classes the next day.

"We call this the power of negative thinking," said Hill.

"We kept pinching ourselves," he said. "People kept coming up and congratulating her — we were all just blown away."

Her mother is looking forward to traveling with Cortney as her chaperone.

Her father, originally from Texas, does not come from a farming background and is an auto technician. "We're just having the time of our lives with this, not having come from this," said Hill.

Her mother, from Howard County, showed horses for years and still has two as "pasture ornaments." She also led 4-H horse clubs. Although she would



Cortney Hill-Dukehart is joined by her parents, Marlene Dukehart and Robert Hill at the 18-acre Sunrise Sunset Farm.

have enjoyed teaching Cortney about horses, Dukehart is glad that Cortney was given the chance to decide which animals to exhibit.

"When she joined 4-H that first year, we bought her chickens. We sat her down at the end of the year and she said, 'I want a pig.'" Later a sheep, then a steer, then Angus animals followed, but "it has always been her decision to do it," she said.

"All we did was support her — it was always something she wanted to do," said Hill.

## Shows, Conferences

Her six mandatory shows will send her to Colorado, Nevada, back to Maryland, and Wisconsin, besides a conference in California. Cortney is chair of the Eastern Regional Show.

Most recently she headed to Wooster, Ohio to the Certified Angus Beef headquarters, the first queen to attend the seminar that board members attend to acquaint them more thoroughly with the business.

She plans to attend state and county fairs and field days. She also attended the Pennsylvania Farm Show. In addition she hopes to attend a national junior show in Calgary. She has been invited to numerous state meetings and banquets.

"A lot of the neighboring states have been really supportive," she said. "It has been a long time since there has been a Miss American Angus from the East."

According to Cortney many of the Miss American Angus participants come from the Midwest.

## A Platform

Cortney looks at the position as not only an honor but also a platform.

"For Cortney to be a role model for the younger girls is exciting," said Hill. "I can remember when she met her first Miss American Angus. Cortney was so excited that she remembered her name," said Dukehart.

Cortney is looking forward to working one-on-one with younger Angus sweethearts, queens, and princesses as they hand out ribbons together at shows.

"Even my appearance can set a standard — even my carriage sets an example," she said. While she is at an agricultural event representing the Angus breed, Cortney will wear the official red, black, and white colors plus a jacket, sash, and pin given to her.

The dress code changes with location, as she will wear boots

and more western-looking wear when she travels to Denver.

## Her Show Ring Career

Cortney has enjoyed success not only now as a representative but in her own show ring career, which was launched by 4-H participation.

In her first year of showing Angus cattle she purchased two steers, then switched to heifers, a better option, according to her mother, who became attached to the animals. The steer Freckles, for example, although not a winner in the show ring, still resides at the farm.

4-H livestock judging participation proved useful for Cortney as she picked out her first heifers at a Virginia sale.

"Livestock judging helped me to figure out which animal to select, since I went to sales and picked them out," she said. She participated on the Maryland team that enjoyed success in the national competition in Louisville. She is also lending her expertise to 4-H'ers as a helper for the livestock judging 4-H club.

After her first heifers were purchased, "from there it just kept snowballing every year." The farm is now host to 15 head of heifers, steers, and one bull now on bull test. All of the animals are in Cortney's name. She is expecting a calf crop of five calves this spring.

Cortney will be taking three heifers and three steers to shows this year, which may prove to be a challenge as she will also be handling Miss American Angus responsibilities, such as handing out ribbons during shows.

Last year Cortney had the champion Angus heifer at the Maryland State Fair, plus the grand champion bull at Maryland's Breeders Show, in addition

to the champion cow-calf pair at the same show.

She came away with premier exhibitor honors at the Maryland Breeders Show and at the Maryland State Fair.

## Her Own Fitting

Cortney does all her own fitting and clipping. According to her father, at a national show she attended a several-day fitting school. "She had the technique. She knew what she was doing, she just lacked confidence," he said. "When she came back you couldn't stop her."

"I would go down to the barn and practice," she said.

"Bob was afraid he was going to get clipped," said Dukehart.

Although heifers are usually her animals of choice for the show ring, Cortney still exhibits steers and last year showed a bull. She also enjoys showing cow/calf pairs.

"We've had so much fun showing cow/calves," said Hill.

"We start fooling with them from the time they're born. They're halter broke by the time they're two weeks old," said Dukehart.

## Angus Association Activities

Angus Association's first year in the cattle ring, a friend informed her that with Angus cattle she could not only exhibit cattle but also participate in other activities. After that conversation Cortney purchased an Angus and quickly became involved with the junior association.

At the junior national conference, for example, she participated in Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) Conferences, which has opened the door for participation in the

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