

MICHELLE KUNJAPPU
Lancaster Farming Staff

GETTYSBURG (Adams Co.)

— To the audience who will watch the bullriding drama played out at the Farm Show rodeo, the cowboy riding the bulls will be the center of their attention. To Dave Martin, however, the bulls themselves are the stars of the show.

Martin, a stock contractor for more than 30 years, will supply bulls for the High School Rodeo, Saturday, Jan. 18 at 7 p.m.

The Farm Show will also host a rodeo Friday evening Jan. 17 at 7 p.m.

He has supplied the High School Rodeo's bulls for at least 10 years, and produced rodeos in the Farm Show arena several times since 1975.

For the participants' protection, Martin takes younger bulls, 1½ to 3½ years old and weighing 1,100 to 1,400 pounds.

He plans to take the 24 bulls for each of the 24 bullriders the morning of the rodeo, and return them to the farm after the rodeo.

In the days preceding the event, "we set up the chutes and the pens behind the chutes and try to get everything cleaned up" besides having a prerodeo round-up.

"We catch the stock about 10 days before the rodeo," he said. "We bring them in and pen them up, because they can be elusive."

He wants to keep them close by so there are no surprises or last-minute chases through the pastures.

Bitten By The Bullriding Bug

Bulls A Big Part Of Martin's Life



Bucking bull "Calico Joe" with companions at Dave Martin's Bullride Mania farm, Gettysburg.

Room To Move Around
Four farms known as Gettysburg Land and Cattle Company together make up 600 acres of

owned and 50 acres rented land. "These animals need room to move around," said Martin. The animals he is referring to are the 90 bulls, 30-40 bucking

horses, and 4-5 riding horses that make their home on the operation.

During the winter, employees find other jobs, but in the summer months five to ten people help Martin drive truck, feed stock, and set up and tear down for the rodeos. During a show, 30 people may be involved which includes judges, timers, secretaries, clowns, and bullfighters.

Martin's fiancée Carol Hoffman also helps at the operation year-

round. The bulls may be bought or farm-raised on Martin's operation.

He was fortunate to be able to purchase "Johnny Rotten," a bull of one of the most famous bucking bull bloodlines. The "Plummer" bloodline was named after breeder Charlie Plummer, Sayre, Okla., who spent 40 years breeding bucking bulls.

Cattle of the Plummer line are usually white with black ears and Dalamation-like spots. Plummers are a fine-boned, smaller animal, with the males weighting about 1,350 pounds.

Good bucking bulls usually have Brahma and Longhorn blood, a "mainstay" in bucking bull breeding, said Martin.

"A purebred brahman usually doesn't buck very well, but if you get a good one, it's really good," he said. "They need a little extra care, they not really suited to cold winters, so most of our bulls are a quarter to half Brahma."

Some of the best crosses include Brangus (¾ Brahman and ¼ Angus) which are black, slick-haired, have floppy ears, and, as rule, do not have any horns. These cattle are called "muley," or "slick-headed."

Another preferred crossbred is the Braford, (¾ Brahma and ¼ Hereford) cattle, which "usually come out red with a white face with black stripes — what we call brindle," he said.

Martin also has Simbrahs, or Simmental and Brahma cross-breeds.

The breeding program happened a bit by accident.

"I started in the '70s with a farmer in East Berlin (a nearby town), who was boarding a few bulls.

"Some of his cows got bred by accident, but it actually worked out because we got some really

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