

LEMENAGER

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A SOLID FOUNDATION

From early childhood, Luke and Chuck learned the value of setting a good foundation. Their parents instilled in them the work ethic, patience, and stamina needed to sustain through the process of beginning a project and seeing it through until the end.

The brothers didn't make the decision to become part of the Angus community on a whim. Having been in the cattle industry all of their lives, they knew the commitment and hard work it takes to operate a registered herd of cattle.

By purchasing a few high-end females and using embryo transplant, they have steadily built their program into 60 head of Angus cattle.

FARM HISTORY

The farm in Iroquois County that Luke and Chuck were raised on has been in the family for 175 years. In Fairbury, Chuck and Tori's farm is also steeped in family history for over 150 years. "Our children are the seventh generation to live on this farm," Chuck proudly states.

Stacy also brings a family heritage that is deeply ingrained in production agriculture and cattle. "We live on a farmstead where Stacy's great grandfather raised and fed cattle," states Luke. "We, as a whole, are deeply rooted in the livestock industry and proud to continue the tradition."

After years of being involved with other breeds and analyzing the breed associations, they knew that Angus was the direction they wanted to go. "The passion that is shown through the Angus junior program, along with the quality of the cattle, is what made us realize that was the avenue we wanted to take," shares Luke. "We looked at it as a challenge to be competitive in this arena."

So, with that in mind, in 1998 Luke took a bonus check from his job selling seed and purchased a 9F83 daughter, that Chuck had seen and recommended. Luke shares, "Stacy and I had been dating for 3 years. We went and looked at the heifer together,



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liked what we saw, and decided to use my bonus to purchase the heifer rather than get engaged. We believed the investment in that heifer would be a great foundation to build our future on."

The decision to invest in that 1120 granddaughter proved to be a good one. The Angus program at Lemenagers has now become a leading contender, not only in the state of Illinois, but in the Angus community as a whole.

FAMILY

Luke and Stacy have been married for 12 years now, have a daughter, Paige who is 7, and together they run the farm located in Hudson, IL. The top cow/calf pairs along with the cattle being offered at the annual Labor Day sale, held at their farm, can be found there.

Chuck, his wife Tori, and their 6-year-old twins Curt and Grace, operate the Fairbury division where the yearlings and show cattle are housed.

Luke and Chuck unanimously agree that they rely heavily upon their spouses. With all four having off the farm careers, handling the day-to-day chores is truly a team effort, Luke shares, "Our wives are an asset to the success of our program. As the herd increases, they have had to take on a lot more responsibility, and we feel very fortunate that they can!"

"Tori and I are passionate about the cows and we love the fact that we are able to raise our families in this environment," shares Stacy, "you can't have a better platform than the livestock and 4-H systems for our young people to grow up in."

Off the farm, Chuck deals with Illinois hog producers in his job as a buyer for Tyson Fresh Meats in Forrest. Tori is the lead surgical assistant for Dr. Kirk Noraian, a leading periodontist in the Bloomington area. Stacy has been with State Farm for 12 years and covers a central Illinois territory as a Commercial Specialist. Luke is a District Sales Manager for Kruger Seeds, a division of Monsanto. "We are each proud of our careers and thankful to be able to balance them with our love of the cattle business" said Chuck.

Growing up, besides their Dad, the brothers relied on their cousin Robert Lemenager, who lived across the section from them, for show

cattle knowledge and advice. As time has passed, Bob's family looks to Luke and Chuck as they once did him for advice and support. The foundation females for Bob's oldest children Dillon and Gabrielle were mostly sourced from Luke and Chuck, and they own a select group of cows in partnership with them. In fact, the heifer that Gabrielle won with at the Junior Nationals and the IL State Fair this past summer is the product of a partnership cow. It's fair to say that family plays a huge role within the Lemenager team.

THE PROGRAM

"We are in our 11th year of producing Angus genetics, and from day one, we have never strayed in the direction we want our program to go," states Luke. "We are raising the same kind of cattle today that we began with in 1998. Our goal and perspective has never changed." Helping with that is the rigid check-and-balance routine Lemenager Cattle has in place. They each routinely visit the others farm, giving the other advice and direction. The mutual respect that is shared between the brothers is one of the strongest bonds they share. "I guarantee, I don't know another set of brothers that get along or work better together than Luke and Chuck" shares Stacy.

The brothers are passionate when talking about their cow families. "The Travett cow, and now her daughters, are really making an impact for us. They are relatively unique and offer the show ring look along with real performance that are hard to come by" said Chuck. "The Bear Mountain 601 cow has been a game changer for us, and we will continue to replicate her genetics. And yet, our base genetics of Forever Ladies and Evergreens are continually producing the females and bulls that we strive for" said Luke.



Luke and Chuck are also proud of their focus on Junior families and teamwork. Selling heifers to juniors is one of the most rewarding aspects of the business for Luke and Chuck. "We pride ourselves on quality cattle and we work hard to support our customer base and the Junior Angus program in Illinois" says Luke.

When making the decision as to which breed to focus their program on, the Junior Angus Association was one of the main aspects that drew them Angus. "We love the passion that is shown through the Junior program, there is none that compares to it," states Chuck.

Paige is excited about the prospect of showing cattle in the next couple of years, with the twins, Curt and Grace, just a few years behind her. For now, supporting their customer base is their main focus, but they certainly look forward to the day when all three kids are involved with the Junior Association and are out there showing.

THE FUTURE

Lemenager Cattle's recently held 8th Annual Labor Day Sale is one of the more unique sales held each year. The 3-day open house format works well for those with busy holiday weekend schedules. The format ensures that everyone, from those who come early Saturday morning to those that can't make it until Monday, gets the chance to purchase their animal of choice by conducting bid-offs.

This allows each potential buyer the ability to visit with the family in order to gain information about that animal. It affords them the opportunity to see the sire or dam, maybe even see a sibling or two, and to get some history on the genetics. Luke and Chuck have found this to be a tremendous success and plan to continue that process for years to come.

Cattle are also available year-round at the farm through Private Treaty. Luke recalls the year 2004, when the Reserve Champion Heifer at the IL State Fair Junior Show wasn't purchased from them until Christmas weekend.

Along with their Sale, yearly consignments to the Illinois Futurity, and private treaty sales, Lemenager Cattle is excited to dive deeper into the Angus market with their consignments to the Lamoine Valley Sale this year. "The Lamoine Valley has been very successful over the years due to the quality of cattle and the people that put it on. You can be sure our first consignments to this sale will be top notch" says Chuck.



Another area they are really excited about is their web site that was launched last summer. "Word-of-mouth will always be the best advertising a business can have, but utilizing every form of technology increases the knowledge and information that customers can garner on your program and you as individuals," shares Luke.

The web site is used not only to promote the Lemenager Cattle program, but also to congratulate those families that have purchased their genetics and gone on to win with them. You can find photos and videos of their top-performing sires and donors along with information about upcoming sales.

Even with all the information out there, Luke encourages people to come to the farm to take a look at the animals for themselves. Chuck agrees, "I firmly believe we have amassed a tremendous set of females. We enjoy showing families the donors and cornerstone females that produced our top prospects."

Lemenager Cattle hang their hat on a simple theme, "Join the Team". The quality of Angus genetics they promote combined with their exceptional customer service has earned them a great reputation in Illinois built on a strong foundation.

Lemenager Cattle

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