



Cowboy Bulls

Lucky 7 Angus named U.S. Industry Livestock Leader of the Year

By Codi Vallery-Mills

During the 2016 National Western Livestock Show in Denver, Jim Jensen, a fourth generation Wyoming cattleman and owner of Lucky 7 Angus, was named U.S. Industry Livestock Leader of the Year.

The National Western and the Green Family Foundation have jointly been recognizing livestock industry leaders since 1946. Among the first awarded was Warren Monfort, a pioneer in the cattle feeding industry.

Leading the Pack

The industry leader award is achieved by Lucky 7 through a lot of sheer determination, foresight and strength from God, according to Jensen.

He has taken great strides in being successful in a variety of ways to benefit his customers. This includes high elevation and feed efficiency testing.

Lucky 7 Angus cattle are raised at one of the coldest places in the nation – 7,000-10,000 feet elevation of rugged terrain with not much grass – near Riverton, Wyo.

“Our saying is ‘Our cows need to be able to graze at 30 mph to stay alive.’ When doing so we develop all our cattle in conditions tougher than almost all, if not all commercial cattle ranches, to ensure they will holdup,” Jensen says. They coined the term “cowboy bulls” to describe their seedstock as it just seemed fitting for these unique bulls.

At certain altitudes cattle can become ill from brisket disease, which can lead to death. To protect their high elevation breeders, Jensen was the first to create minimum standards in Pulmonary Arterial Pressures (PAP) Testing, which set a benchmark of 90 percent of the bulls tested at 7,200 feet having a PAP score of 44mmHg (how many millimeters the mercury would rise when the air pressure changed) or below.

“By running our program this way, kind of survival of the fittest, we also created some of the most feed efficient cattle anywhere, which became evident when our customers started telling stories of how much less they needed feed and how many more cattle they could run on their ranch after switching to Lucky 7 Angus bulls,” Jensen says.

He explains it was a “light bulb” moment when he heard about the GrowSafe Feed Intake System. Jensen thought, “How much more efficient can we make our cattle using the system?”

“You see, we developed our efficient genetics by weeding out the non-efficient or bottom 85 percent. Now using the GrowSafe technology we could locate and propagate the elite feed efficiency animals, or top 15 percent. By incorporating the two we have made incredible leaps in feed efficiency both on pastures and in feedlots,” Jensen says.

To his knowledge, Lucky 7 Angus is one of the first individual producers in the U.S. to purchase a



GrowSafe system, and the only large-scale seedstock producer that limit feeds every animal.

Successful Operation

The family operation dates back to 1895. The ranch began when Jensen's great-grandfather immigrated from Denmark to the Boulder, Wyo., area in 1895. That first winter proved to be a struggle in a region known for snow and persistent bitter cold. He would clear snow with a shovel to provide access to grass for his three horses and seven head of cows. He was a cowman that strived to put others before himself and to be the best at what he did. That goal remains the driving force of his great-grandson, Jim Jensen, to this day.

"I think of myself as just a hardworking rancher that does my best at everything I can. Since I chose to raise and sell Angus bulls, making our customers the most profitable ranchers in the industry is what pushed us to be the industry leaders in feed efficiency, high elevation/PAP testing and to offer the nation's only four-year guarantee on bulls," he says.

His leadership in profitability has propelled the family ranch to grow from a 350-cow operation 21 years ago, to a 2,300-cow operation today, with ranches in Wyoming and in Oklahoma.

The Oklahoma ranches are used for calving the fall-born bull calves. Those calves are then relocated to Wyoming to be developed under the feed and elevation standards Lucky 7 is known for.

The Oklahoma ranches were purchased four years ago and thus Jensen says they are getting their feet wet with the fall bulls, but so far so good.

He explains the reason they bought the Oklahoma ranches was due to the demand of their unique product – cattle that excel at the bunk, in high altitude climates and are durably tough.

"In order to accommodate our customers' needs we had to grow. We felt it would be impossible to



raise bulls with our quality assurance using contact herds, so we needed more land. The land in Oklahoma was the most reasonably priced per cow unit. Hence we are locating and propagating the best genetics we have and placing embryos in recip females in Oklahoma. Once weaned, they move back to Wyoming to go through our strenuous testing. Same product, same quality assurance, just built in a cheaper factory," Jensen says.

Jensen says running that many cattle shouldn't be anymore difficult than typical ranch numbers – if you have the right people who are capable of being efficient and good businessmen – but adding more than 1,300 mother cows, ranches in a different state and the paperwork of registered seedstock has created a few grey hairs.

"I think the biggest challenge is to get everybody on our team understanding that this is a business and every decision should be made economically as well as strategically in order to make the ranch sustainable through any hardships, which will give us all the piece of mind and enjoyment of having the greatest job on earth for many years to come," Jensen says of Lucky 7's management today.

Key people that have been great assets to Lucky 7 is the Stajduhar family which runs the Riverton operation. Jensen says they are incredible people with incredible work ethics and standards. He gives them credit as to why GrowSafe said Lucky 7 had the highest R Squared number in feed efficiency testing, or the highest accuracy of all.

"Looking at these accomplishments it would be hard to deny that Lucky 7 Angus is progressive, but as an individual, I feel I am not very progressive and I desire to do much more to help my hardworking customers. Glory be to God who has given me these visions and the strength to enact them," Jensen says. **CBW**

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