



NICHOLS

NEWSLETTER

A few THOUGHTS



j. david nichols

The first year I voted, I marked an X for Richard Nixon. Prior to voting, I had watched the first televised presidential debate between him and John F. Kennedy. Even though the U.S. and Russia were rattling their nuclear sabers, the talking head (one) talked mostly about how much Nixon sweated. Some things never change...

I've voted in every Presidential election since then and have seen major realignments in voters against the "establishment" in Washington D.C.

It's going to happen again. The current choices are—a blond WASP female, an old Jewish socialist, two Spanish speaking Cubans and a billionaire who offends everyone except those who believe the current ruling class takes them, thier taxes, and their votes for granted.

I think the American voters will get it right this time—and our country will be better for it. At last, we may address terrorism, immigration, balance of trade, national debt, and under-employment of the middle class.

18 months ago I was elected to the American Angus Association Board of Directors by delegates chosen by its' members, many of whom wanted new leadership and better communications regarding policy.

It is a "work in progress" and I believe we're on the right track. It's imperative that AAA provide its members with the technology that will provide-

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Diversification Keeps Us In Business —Frank Colbert



Frank Colbert has a Southeast Iowa farm that relies on diversification for profitability year in and year out, which includes 600 acres of cash crops, 140 commercial cows, farmer feedlot, 3,200 natural market hog finishing unit, and CRP ground on some highly erodible soil. According to Frank, "In any given year, a different segment of the operation will be the most profitable. We rely on this diversification to keep us in business."

Colbert Farms is a partnership made up of Frank, his mother Joan, wife Deana, and stepson Kellan. For an operation their size, this makes for a limited labor force, so low input cattle and streamline management are a must. "We start calving in April and try to calve the majority of them on pasture. Calving ease is a big consideration for us, and it is very rare that we pull a calf," explains Frank. They go onto rented pasture in early June when they turn the bulls out. Natural breeding is by far the best option for them in terms of fitting into the production year for all their enterprises, and they have used Nichols bulls for the last twenty years.

Their feedlot finishes approximately 120 head of their steers and heifers, and they feel they get them off to a better

start if they creep feed before weaning. "In early July, we start creep feeding. This gets them bunk broke and ready to wean in late September or early October. The calves then go into the feedlot where they continue on a self-limiting ration that is self-fed, progressing from a starter, growing and finishing ration. According to Frank, "This self-fed pellet ration works out great for us. We don't have the time and can't justify the expense of the equipment to feed a total mixed ration. Fishmeal in the pellet regulates intake, and in addition, we provide them some free choice hay."

Once the calves are weaned and the farming is done, they move the cows to stalks, where the cows are kept for as long as the weather allows. "We no-till our crops, so the limiting factor on keeping the cows on stalks is more mud than snow. To have the no-till work well, we can't have the cows tearing up the field. Once they come off the corn stalks, we put them on a ration of baleage and ground low quality hay. More recently, we have been using corn silage and dry ground hay fed in a self-feeding wagon, which we are very pleased with."

In terms of the fed cattle, they market them live using Producers Brokerage. "We

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A few THOUGHTS

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real dollars and problem free genetics to their commercial customers' cattle.

During my 63 years in the seedstock business, I've seen Angus show cattle go from belt buckle shorts to the frame 10 hunters and jumpers. Now most club calves are fluffy teddy bears.

In the mean time, performance breeders and A.I. Studs believe "more Calving Ease Direct Epd(CE) is always better"

Our own data and our customers' comments indicate the Angus breed probably has crossed the line in shortening gestations. Gestation length has a major effect on birth wt. and computing CE.

Before we go to pasture with our pairs, we cull and sell the dry cows that lost their calves. Last year we had 12 dries out of nearly 1300 head. All but one of those calves weighed less than 70 lbs and came 7 - 15 days early. Most died or were trampled when the weather turned nasty. They may have died because their dams didn't have adequate colostrum and their lungs weren't fully developed.

At an AAA Board meeting, Dr. Dan Moser presented actual Angus data regarding CE, the most reliable indicator of assisted births for sires used on first calf heifers. The data clearly indicated a minimal increase in unassisted births for sires' with +6 to +13 CE.

I would rather assist one calf due to birth weight than have several others die from multiple causes. Many times these early little calves need assistance to nurse and their dams often need injections of prostaglandin to start lactation.

Now's the time to save every calf that's born, because feeder cattle prices are rallying and feedlot margins are finally positive. Perhaps the best news—the ratio of retail beef prices to pork and poultry are returning to typical levels.

Nichols bulls, as always, are priced reasonably. We have a good selection of bulls in every price range including Angus "heifer bulls" that will keep your first calf heifers and banker happy.

If you're busy farming and/or calving and will be needing a bull(s), pay us a visit or give Ross or me a call about our sight-unseen program.

BIVI Beef Bulletin



by Dr. Jody Wade DVM

Professional Services Veterinarian

Dung Beetles Save the Cattle Industry Millions

Dung beetles may not be commonly thought of as a partner to cattle producers, but they are very beneficial insects. In fact, dung beetles provide benefits estimated to be worth up to \$380 million annual in the United States.

Think of them as your partner in pasture management as they go to work in dung pats in pastures, breaking down the manure and burying it in the ground. This proves beneficial in three main ways:

1—Reduced Cattle Pests

The dung pats they break down hold eggs from common cattle pests. This means healthy dung beetle populations help reduce the damaging pest populations that affect cattle herds, including horn flies and nematodes.

2—Improves Pasture Productivity

They incorporate manure into the soil, which enriches the soil, and



enhances soil properties and water retention. Some estimates calculate the amount of nitrogen incorporated into manure by dung beetles to be equivalent to applying 200 pounds per acre of commercial nitrogen fertilizer. That's a huge cost savings, and can make a positive difference in your pasture health.

3—Increased Pasture Access

Breaking apart the manure helps raise the carrying capacity of the grazing area, so less total land is needed.

Cattle producers and veterinarians are becoming more appreciative of how dung beetles help the environment in the pasture and beyond; for example, reduced methane gases also positively impact air quality. People are more aware of these ecological and environmental factors, and want to manage things so that beneficial natural systems like dung beetles can thrive within modern cattle production practices.

In order for beneficial dung beetles to thrive, it's important to choose a parasite control product that minimizes adverse effects on them, since these products end up in the manure. Cydectin® from Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc. is an example of a product that uses milbemycins/moxidectin as the active ingredient.

Applied in accordance with the cattle health plan established by you and your veterinarian, CYDECTIN is very effective against parasitic worms, producing few or no harmful effects on dung beetles.

Stanley is a Nichols Composite Bull



His ration contains energy from the sun, coal fired turbines, Fort Randall hydro-electric dams, and Iowa windmills from the local Rural Electric Coop.

Dave can program the electric sign from his desk in the bull barn.

This is a real concern of his female partners and the Nichols' cowpokes.

Colbert Farms, from page one

usually start marketing the fed cattle in July, and Producer's does a great job getting us the best price. They know our cattle and seem to always find the top market for us whether that is in Pennsylvania, Omaha or Kansas. They charge us a very reasonable per head flat fee to market the cattle, and we work on a three-percent pencil shrink, which is better than the actual shrink we would get if we took them to the sale barn. Ninety percent of the time the buyer pays for trucking, and if we have some odds and end cattle left at the end of the season, they can usually get them on a load with another feeder's cattle. We are very pleased with the job they do, and it takes a job off my hands that I really don't enjoy."

To make the system work, Colberts use genetics from Nichols Farms. Frank explains, "I bred straight Angus for years, but my fed weights started to be lower than I wanted, which is why I switched to their Angus-Simmental hybrids. With the hybrids, our light loads are about 1,350 lbs. and the larger end finishes about 1,450 lbs. We also get a boost from maternal heterosis in our cowherd. We used to buy replacement heifers, but decided that was defeating the purpose of buying these top genetics we get from Nichols. We still have some of the purchased cows around, and I can pick them out without looking at an ear tag. They just don't have the quality of our home raised replacements."

When picking out bulls, Frank looks first at EPDs. "I try to keep it simple. I first look at post-weaning rate-of-gain and then calving ease; those are my priorities. I will then glance to make sure they have acceptable milk and carcass traits. I try not to get lost in too many traits, but keep it basic to what is most economically important to my operation. Objectively, I can narrow it down to about 15 bulls, and I then look at their phenotype to find the ones



Kellan Coppinger has been at Frank Colbert's side since he was in diapers. That will change when he goes off to Ellsworth Community College this fall. He's majoring in Ag Tech and will be spending his Saturdays playing football. After Ellsworth, he's enrolling at Iowa State University.

I want to buy. I find the best doing cattle have lots of depth of body, and the other traits I look for are length of body, good feet and legs, and thickness. I really like Nichols because with the size of their operation, they have great selection to choose from as well as excellent objective data."

He also likes dealing with Dave at Nichols Farms. Frank explains, "They are always available to answer your questions. I never brought a bull home I didn't like or had a problem with. One time I had a bull go bad before he was delivered, and Dave sent a better one than the bull I had selected. I also enjoy talking to Dave. He has a great sense of humor and is a great promotor for the industry. I like the size and professionalism of their operation. Sometimes someone local wants me to buy bulls from them, but they just don't have the data and selection Nichols does."

Colbert defines how a diversified crop and livestock farm can be profitable year in and year out. They make the most of their labor resources, managing a fine-tuned operation, and Nichols Farms genetics play a big role in making their cattle operation work.

—by Bob Hough



Each load (10 tons) contains alfafa hay, oat hay, modified distillers wet gluten and corn silage. Last fall the ration included corn stover bales. This total mixed ration fed in tires has reduced Nichols' feed costs 20%.



Nichols Cows Are Fed a Total Mixed Ration



Buying or Selling Your Calves?

We Can Help!
Nothing Succeeds like a team effort



Innovative Livestock Auction Markets, are adding real dollars to their customers calves that are preconditioned, vaccinated, and have source verified genetics.

Livestock Auction Markets' role in price discovery is the key to profitable cow/calf producers— especially in uncertain markets.

These Livestock Auction Markets advertise Nichols genetics and the role that Superior Beef Genetics play in producing cattle that gain efficiently and grade mostly choice.

These feeder cattle and replacement females are the ones that bring order buyers to the sale barns that team up with Nichols Farms.

- Anita Livestock Auction
- Bloomfield Livestock Auction
- Clarinda Livestock Auction
- Colfax Livestock Sales
- Creston Livestock Auctions
- Denison Livestock Auction
- Dunlap Livestock
- Farmers Livestock Auction
- Fort Scott Livestock Auction
- Green City Livestock
- Guthrie Livestock Auction
- Humeston Livestock Auction
- Joplin Regional Stockyards

- Keoco Auction Company, LLC
- Knoxville Regional Market
- Lamoni Livestock Auction
- Lolli Bros. Livestock Mkt. inc
- Madison County Livestock Auction
- Massena Livestock Auction
- Russell Livestock Market
- Valentine Livestock Auction



Call-- Ross Havens
 Office: 641-369-2829
 Cell: 641-745-5241
rossh@nicholsfarms.biz



Cowboys You Can Count On



Kody Havens is the New Hire at Team Nichols

Kody Havens is responsible for the Nichols Angus cows and calves. This entails feeding, calving, A I, checking pastures, and monitoring herd bulls during breeding season.

Dave Nichols trusted him to do this job because Kody has been preparing for it since he was in high school.

Kody graduated from DMACC with a degree in Agribusiness. He was active in Post Secondary Agriculture Student (PAS) which provides competition to promote individual growth, leadership and career preparation. He won several individual and team championship awards in PAS Beef Specialists.

He enrolled at Iowa State and received his BS degree and went to work the next Monday at Nichols Farms.

Kody's own words describe it best— "Growing up, I would go to cattle sales with my Dad. It opened my eyes to the opportunities in the seedstock industry. The position at



Kody Havens

Nichols Farms gave me an opportunity to be a part of a great team. I believe in Nichols genetics and their programs that help their customers."

He lives in his home town of Wiota and enjoys racing stock cars and fishing.

For Sale: Superior Beef Genetics

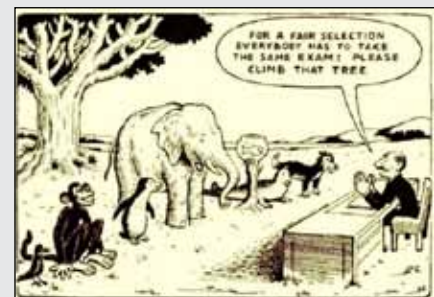
from: **Nichols Farms - Iowa**

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- ◆ 100 spring yearling heifers - pure bred Angus, Simm, S Devon\$1500
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- ◆ 15 coming two/year old and 18 month old fall yearling bulls
- ◆ 160 Yearling Bullssee page 6

from: **Nichols Genetic Source Partners**

- ◆ 200 1st calf Angus & Sim/Angus cows with calves at side sired by Nichols Bulls - Iowa
- ◆ 100 5-8 year old Angus & Sim/Angus cows bred to Best Nichols Sim Bulls - Iowa
- ◆ **Check out the full listing at— www.nicholsfarms.biz**



Our Education System

"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."

- Albert Einstein



by **Ronda Driskill**
*Commercial
 Beef Specialist
 ADM Alliance
 Nutrition™*

Looking back... Was it a job well done?

Sale day is a day of great anticipation. We often visually assess cattle on sale day—health and body condition. Performance is based on cost of gain, carcass quality or feed efficiency. Cattle producers have many opportunities to keep cattle healthy and to optimize productivity.

A balanced diet is vital to health and productivity. The industry standard is to keep cow-calf pairs on a good mineral program and offer creep feed to supplement the nursing calf, increasing weaning weight. Nutrition for the gestating brood cow impacts future calf performance. Fetal growth, organ and muscle development, and, in the final few weeks of gestation, adipose (fat) development is influenced by the nutritional adequacy of the diet.

A study conducted with brood cows showed organic (complexed) trace minerals (copper, zinc, manganese and cobalt) supplementation during the last trimester of gestation resulted in a weaning weight advantage of 48 pounds per calf compared with calves

from dams that did not receive mineral supplementation. Calves from dams supplemented with the organic trace minerals also had higher blood cortisol, possibly enabling these calves to more easily handle stress associated with weaning.

ADM's core beef breeder supplements provide organic (complexed) trace minerals in combination with hydroxy minerals; both mineral sources are more bioavailable compared with inorganic minerals. ADM beef supplements also target protein, energy and mineral supplementation to maximize forage utilization.

Mintrate® products supply needed types and amounts of protein along with mineral sources that help drive efficient forage utilization while supplying a complete supplement package to help ensure genetic potential for future generations can be attained.

Roughage Buster® products enhance the efficiency of rumen digestion by boosting the rumen microbial population's ability to extract more nutrients from forage.

AminoGain®/AminoGro® products supply sources of rumen bypass amino acids lacking in the diet and optimizes rumen fermentation; thus, maximizing bacterial protein availability to the animal. AMPT™ Mineral incorporates advanced research and new mineral technologies to target optimum mineral and vitamin nutrition for cattle.

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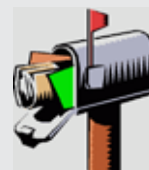


Allen Moczygamba Visits Nichols Farms

Moczygamba is the new chief executive officer (CEO) of the American Angus Association.

In addition to a tour of Nichols Farms, he and AAA Board Member, Dave Nichols, had a productive conversation about the long range strategic plans that are on the next meeting's agenda.

LETTERS from you



From: Galen & Lori Fink, Randolph KS

Dave- Congratulations on the nice article in the January 2016 Drover's Journal. I had a few laughs reading it!

Few people know that Phyllis and Lillian make you look good! Again, congratulations, my friend, on the Saddle and Sirloin Award - what a great award.

From Harold Harmon, Wedowee AL

Guys, we been calving since September 15 and will calve out around 215 mama cows. We purchased five bulls from you.

The Devon/Angus (DA) bull was put in a small herd of Angus and SX1 mamas. We are really liking these calves. Had four born today, you can really see the meat in these young rascals at a young age.

The next group was 34 first calf heifers that we used one of your SX1 calving ease bulls on. They are Angus, SX1 and Braunvieh crosses. Not sure how many have calved, boy, do I like them. Small calves that we never touched except to tag them.

Our remaining calves are sired by your bulls and some Hinkle bulls we used in the past. I truly believe we have some of the best looking calves that we have ever had. Now we need to move down the road about seven months and see what we have.

From Jack Railsback, White City KS

Dad went through the snorter dwarfism problems in the early 50's. He had 32 sire daughter matings to prove his bull clean. He said you could register the dwarf calves, but not the red ones. Congratulations on your "hanging". Picture that is.

From Bob Blome, DVD, Audubon IA

I have very much enjoyed reading about your Saddle & Sirloin Selection. Congratulations to you and your employees. What a lasting impression to me is how you rose from the ground up with common sense and integrity to the core. Thank you for being a great spokesman for the beef industry as well as Iowa agriculture. Best wishes in your future endeavors. Stop by if you are ever in the neighborhood.

From Beth Doran, Orange City IA

Congratulations!!! You have a great legacy— and have done so much for the beef industry.

Nichols Farms

Superior Beef Genetics

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Bridgewater, Iowa 50837-8047
Nichols Bull Barn: 641-369-2829
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Nichols Farms

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- ◆ **PB SIMMENTAL** —
- ◆ **PB SOUTH DEVON** —
- ◆ **NICHOLS SX-1 Hybrid** —
- ◆ **NICHOLS DX-1 Hybrid** —
- ◆ **NICHOLS DAX-2 Composite** —

Nichols Good As Gold Z103 is a frame 6.3 ANGUS POWER BULL that thrives on fescue pasture. He's pictured at 45 days of pasture breeding. He's in the top 10% for WW, YW, RADG, Doc, \$F, CW and \$B.



He's not unique at Nichols Farms. Their Simmental and South Devon sires are "phenotypic and genetic look a likes" and graze fescue pastures... Is it any wonder Nichols sired calves top feeder auctions?

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