

Top Value

National Angus Carcass Challenge winners honored at the National Western Stock Show.

Story & photos by
STEVE SUTHER

The top value and grand champion pen in the 2003 National Angus Carcass Challenge (NACC) was claimed by a set of 44 steers owned and fed by Mason Fleenor of Generic Genetics, Ida Grove, Iowa. They were fed 248 days before all were harvested June 6 at Excel Corporation's Schuyler, Neb., plant through Angus America.

NACC is an annual beef value contest sponsored by Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB), *Drovers* magazine and the American Angus Association's Beef Record Service (BRS). Groups of at least 40 steers or heifers sired by registered Angus bulls must be fed in CAB-licensed feedlots, according to NACC coordinator Rod Schoenbine. Winners of the 2003 contest were to be announced Jan. 17 at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver, Colo., where Fleenor was to accept the top prize of \$2,500.

The top steers graded 11.4% Prime and 88.6% Choice, with no discounts; 59.1% of the steers met all criteria for the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand, which include a Modest or higher degree of marbling. Uniformity was outstanding, Schoenbine says, with 63.6% of them hitting the NACC

carcass weight bull's eye of 750 pounds (lb.) to 850 lb., which earned a \$1-per-hundredweight (cwt.) bonus. The steers penciled in at \$106.56 per cwt. on the NACC contest value grid.

"We've been buying them for a long time," Fleenor says of the straight-Angus calves from longtime customer Pattiglenn Angus Ranch, Saint Ignatius, Mont. "They have kept replacement heifers for many years, and much of this NACC success is based on the cows," he adds. "Management is also first-rate. Those cattle don't have a bad day. They were



Mason Fleenor of Ida Grove, Iowa, owned and fed the 2003 NACC grand champion pen. The set of 44 steers graded 11.4% Prime and 88.6% Choice, including 59.1% CAB, with no discounts. [PHOTO COURTESY OF GG GENETICS]

preconditioned at the ranch and came in at 600 to 650 pounds the first of November to our hay and silage ration before moving on to the corn-based ration. We didn't push them, and we didn't implant them because we find implanting cuts grade by 10%."

Sire lines represented were Trendsetter, Sleep Easy, New Design, Rock 'n' D Ambush and California Traveler sons out of Fleenor's program. "A few years ago a load of their cattle went to IBP (now Tyson Fresh Meats) at 66% Prime. The same cattle were second in the region in Best of the Breed last year. Of course, we're back in the NACC for 2004 with these cattle."

Fleenor runs an integrated business that starts with 380 registered Angus cows in western Iowa. He has an alliance with Angus ranches in Montana, where he conditions bulls for the group's annual March sale. That Montana growing yard warms up many of the weaned calves purchased from customers before they go on feed at Fleenor's 1,000-head CAB-licensed Iowa finishing yard.

The name Generic Genetics just doesn't seem to fit the premium-drawing cattle, which may be the final straw in Fleenor's decision to change the name to GG Genetics. "We originally chose the name Generic Genetics because of our using high-accuracy, nationally proven sires, strong in the most economical traits to the beef industry — regardless of name or fame," he explained. "That let us sell high-quality genetics for less. But as our success grew and we moved to broaden our market, many potential customers connected generic with mediocre. Therefore, we decided to change our name to GG Genetics."



Gregory Feedlots, owned by Jim Gregory of Tabor, Iowa, had the strongest overall showing of any CAB feedlot in the contest. The feedlot had seven pens entered in the 2003 NACC and expects to top that this year.

Other winners

Prizes were awarded to the top 10 pens of steers and the top five pens of heifers, as well. A total of 1,500 cattle were entered in the contest, which got a late start last year. (By contrast, some 600 cattle were already entered in the 2004 contest by late December 2003.)

Gregory Feedlots Inc., Tabor, Iowa, fed the top pen of NACC steers. At a contest grid value of \$106.34 per cwt., the 40 steers lagged the champion pen by only 22¢ per cwt., and 52.5 of them qualified for CAB, including 7.5% Prime. More than half of the steers were Yield Grades (YG) 1 and 2, but they were a little lighter, having a 745-lb. carcass average, and 35% were in the 750-lb. to 850-lb. bonus range. There were no discount cattle.

Gregory Feedlots owner Jim Gregory and seedstock producer C.K. Allen of Savannah, Mo., bought the cattle from Johnnie Hubach, Rea, Mo., a longtime sire-
(Continued on page 62)

Table 1: 2003 National Angus Carcass Challenge results

\$/cwt.	% CAB & Prime	% YG 1-2	Carcass wt., lb.	Owner	Feedlot	Packer
Grand champion pen						
\$106.56	59.1	20.5*	790	Generic Genetics, Ida Grove, Iowa	Generic Genetics, Ida Grove, Iowa	Excel, Schuyler, Neb.
Top-value steer pens						
\$106.34	52.5	52.5*	745	Jim Gregory, Tabor, Iowa, and C.K. Allen, Savannah, Mo.	Gregory Feedlots Inc., Tabor, Iowa	Tyson, Denison, Iowa
\$105.07	30.0	62.5*	802	Triangle H Grain & Cattle Co., Garden City, Kan.	Triangle H Grain & Cattle Co., Garden City, Kan.	National, Dodge City, Kan.
\$104.35	36.0	42.0*	773	Thomas Tampke, Dillon, Mont.	Hergert Land & Cattle Co., Greeley, Colo.	Swift, Greeley, Colo.
\$103.84	37.5	32.5	828	Jimmy and Kenny Thomas, Homedale, Idaho	Boise Valley Feeders, Parma, Idaho	Tyson, Boise, Idaho
\$102.84	40.0	37.5	780	Jimmy and Kenny Thomas, Homedale, Idaho	Boise Valley Feeders, Parma, Idaho	Tyson, Boise, Idaho
\$102.69	27.5	55.0	750	Bryan Rentschler, Atkinson, Neb.	Darrel Smith Angus, Atkinson, Neb.	Swift, Grand Island, Neb.
\$102.58	12.5	60.0	787	Jim Gregory, Tabor, Iowa	Gregory Feedlots Inc., Tabor, Iowa	Tyson, Denison, Iowa
\$102.15	34.0	15.9	837	Beller Feedlots, Lindsay, Neb.	Beller Feedlots, Lindsay, Neb.	Swift, Grand Island, Neb.
\$101.97	25.0	55.0	737	Jim Gregory, Tabor, Iowa, and Jane Chastain, Salem, Ind.	Gregory Feedlots Inc., Tabor, Iowa	Tyson, Denison, Iowa
\$101.96	0.0	72.5	764	Jim Gregory, Tabor, Iowa	Gregory Feedlots Inc., Tabor, Iowa	Tyson, Denison, Iowa
Top-value heifer pens						
\$103.76	40.5	50.0	720	Jimmy and Kenny Thomas, Homedale, Idaho	Boise Valley Feeders, Parma, Idaho	Tyson, Boise, Idaho
\$102.31	32.5	37.5	741	Fansher Angus Ranch, Garden City, Kan.	Triangle H Grain & Cattle Co., Garden City, Kan.	National, Dodge City, Kan.
\$100.78	44.5	28.9	681	Generic Genetics, Ida Grove, Iowa	Generic Genetics, Ida Grove, Iowa	Excel, Schuyler, Neb.
\$99.92	21.0	9.3	717	John Estill, Likely, Calif.	Miller Feed Yard, Satanta, Kan.	National, Dodge City, Kan.
\$99.27	28.6	9.5	695	John Estill, Likely, Calif.	Miller Feed Yard, Satanta, Kan.	National, Dodge City, Kan.

* = no outs

Top Value (from page 60)

test cooperator with the seedstock producer. Allen has bought and fed Hubach calves at Gregory's for several years. All three producers were honored with annual CAB awards in 2002. David Trowbridge, Gregory Feedlots manager, was to accept the award and a \$250 prize in Denver.

Allen says Bon-View New Design 878 was the sire of most of those steers, and his progeny had the highest marbling and carcass values. Others were ABS Global Inc. sires Basin Max 602C, SAF Easy Fortune and Plowman of Millbrae. "A lot of the cows that raised these calves were out of Woodland Farms bulls," Allen says, noting data from the contest met sire-testing requirements and were sent to the

American Angus Association to add accuracy to the expected progeny difference (EPD) database.

The cattle were harvested at the Tyson Fresh Meats plant in Denison, Iowa, on April 17 and May 2. Health was excellent, as usual, Allen says. "Johnnie vaccinates two or three weeks prior to weaning, and they get a booster at the feedlot. We take them a little earlier than most calves so they don't



Savannah, Mo., producer C.K. Allen notes that the data from the NACC contest met sire-testing requirements and were submitted to the American Angus Association to build the carcass database used to establish EPDs. Allen and feedlot owner Jim Gregory entered the top pen of the 2003 NACC steer division, after purchasing them from customer and sire-test cooperator Johnnie Hubach, Rea, Mo.



Johnnie Hubach, Rea, Mo., raised the top pen in the 2003 NACC steer division. The steers started on feed at 522 lb. and gained about 3.1 lb. per day.

have to fight bad weather. They came in at 522 pounds and gained about 3.1 pounds per day, pretty good for calf feds."

The grade was also impressive considering the 2003 harvest was 40 days ahead of average, and the calves were implanted twice during the 210 days on feed. "We feed to make money," Allen says. "Since futures showed a big drop-off in June, we started earlier to get some done in April."

Part of a larger group in the feedlot, Allen says, "we selected the 40 NACC entries strictly based on the bull they were sired by. We have 86 calves on feed at Gregory's now from the same herd, and I've given Jim a list of 47 he can select from based on their sires," he reports. Those will again feature progeny of 878, 602C and Easy Fortune, along with calves from a new test bull by Rock 'n' D Ambush.

Trowbridge also was to accept \$100 stipends for the seventh-, ninth- and 10th-place NACC steer pens. Gregory Feedlots had the strongest overall showing of any CAB feedlot in the contest. The feedlot had seven pens entered in the 2003 NACC and expects to top that in 2004.

Top heifer pens

Continuing a pattern, the top value pen of heifers in the NACC came from 2003 Commercial Commitment to

Excellence honorees Jimmy and Kenny Thomas, Homedale, Idaho. The 42 heifers fed at Boise Valley Feeders, an Agri Beef Co. yard near Parma, Idaho, were harvested June 4 and 17 at Tyson's Boise, Idaho, plant. They posted a 720-lb. average carcass weight, and 31% fell in the 750-lb. to 850-lb. bonus range. All but two heifers were Choice, 40.5% were accepted as CAB, and half were YG 2. There was one YG 4 discount. The pen's contest grid value was \$103.76 per cwt.

That was consistent with the two Thomas steer pen entries at Boise Valley, which finished fourth and fifth in the steer category at \$103.84 and \$102.84. "These are the same genetics we have been working on for the last five years, but we keep trying to make them a little better," says Thomas, who was to accept the award and \$250 in Denver.

The genetics are from Rancho Casino, Turlock, Calif., and Dal Porto Livestock of Brentwood, Calif. Sires of the 2003 NACC entries were exclusively Casino bulls, and they included Traveler 6807, Scotch Cap, Rito and Fame influence.

"We keep our heifers every year, and of course, we kept what we thought were the best," Thomas says. Boise Valley Feeders manager Nate Gilliam says the Thomas cattle stand out for feed efficiency as well as carcass quality. They were implanted at the feedlot. David and Carol Medeiros (Rancho Casino) and David Dal Porto were expected to join their friend and customer at the NACC award presentations in Denver.

"I'm glad we could participate," says Thomas, who is back in with three pens for 2004. He says it is not hard to enter, as you just need registration numbers on the sires of the calves. "More people should enter. It's been a real educational experience for me." Thomas emphasizes the fun of competition and working with Boise Valley.

"They do everything they possibly can at Boise Valley to get the most value out of our cattle, and ... it helps me see our herd in a three-year span," Thomas says. "You're turning bulls out thinking ahead to that next calf crop; you've got a set of calves on the ground and the last

year's in the feedlot. It gives you a good picture of where you're going. The NACC competition is just another great tool to help judge that."

Triangle H Grain & Cattle Co., Garden City, Kan., fed the second-place pens in both NACC steer and heifer categories. Both pens were harvested at National Beef Packing Co., Dodge City, Kan. The feedlot owned the 40 steers

from the Warner Ranch of Spearville, Kan., which made 80% Choice or better at an average carcass weight of 802 lb. They were 30.5% CAB, including 7.3% Prime, and 62.5% YG 2 with no discount cattle. They came in at \$105.07 per cwt. on the NACC contest grid.

Manager Sam Hands was to accept the \$200 steer award, and another \$200 for the heifers on behalf of customer Fansher

Angus Ranch, Garden City, Kan. The 40 heifers finished with an average 741-lb. carcass weight, 81% Choice or better and 32.5% CAB, including 7.4% Prime, with a contest grid value of \$102.31.

For more information on entering the 2004 NACC, visit www.cabfeedlots.com, or contact Schoenbine at (330) 345-2333 or rschoenbine@certifiedangusbeef.com.



The top-value pen of heifers in the 2003 NACC came from 2003 Commercial Commitment to Excellence honorees Jimmy (pictured) and Kenny Thomas, Homedale, Idaho. The 42 heifers fed at Boise Valley Feeders, Parma, Idaho, posted a 720-lb. average carcass weight. All but two heifers were Choice, 40.5% were accepted as CAB, and half were YG 2.