



# SOUTH POLL

## GRASS CATTLE ASSOCIATION

SUMMER NEWSLETTER, 2013

### *The Whole System*

By SPGCA President: Teddy Gentry

I read in a recent article about a rancher whose excuse for running bigger cows was to produce bigger bulls that other breeders wanted to buy.

This is the same philosophy as trying to breed steers for the feedlot.

I can't overemphasize that maternal means mama cow. I believe what we need to do is continue to work on educating our commercial cow/calf producers on the cost of these big cows and the profitability in the small cows.

But the education must go deeper.

Keith Johnson of the Alabama Farmers Co-op magazine was at our field day in June. He was amazed that a cattle organization spent a lot of time talking about grass, dung beetles, earthworms, grazing systems, fencing, water and a lot of other management tips instead of just talking about cows. I think that's great!

It makes me proud to be a part of a cattle organization that believes in the whole system it takes to produce good beef rather than just beating me over the head with genetics. I think as a grass-based breed, we realize the importance of a low-input system that we need for our cattle to shine.

The biblical story of teaching men how to fish, to me, has never been more evident than our recent South Poll annual meeting.

I feel as long as we keep teaching and learning together, the cattle will pretty much sell themselves, but only as a part of a low-input grass-based system.



### *People from across 14 states attend the fifth annual South Poll field day*

About 150 people from 14 states attended the fifth annual South Poll Grass Cattle Association field day held Friday and Saturday, June 21 and 22, at Merritt Farms, the home of board members Randy and Yvonne Whisonant in Warrior, Alabama. Randy Whisonant, who has been on the board for two years, welcomed the group to his gorgeous farm, which is located a little north of Birmingham. The tree-shaded area was the perfect way to showcase both Whisonant's cow herd and the animals brought in for the auction.

SPGCA President Teddy Gentry also welcomed those attending and explained how and why he formed the South Poll breed.

The two-day event featured a management practices forum conducted by association board members Greg Judy, Ralph Voss and John Lyons.

Judy, whose home is in Clark, Mo., spoke on the benefits of high-stock-density grazing.

Voss, who is from Linn, Mo., explained how soil amendments

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J.A. Rummler of Rummler Farms, Oscar, La., in the foreground, kept his hand up until he won the bidding for the top-selling lot at the field day. Rummler's bid of \$6,800 for the Lot 5 cow and her heifer calf was the most ever paid for any animal or animal pair at any of the association's five field days.

can jump start the positive impact of good grazing practices.

And Lyons, of Piedmont, Ala., told how he uses annuals to greatly increase the carrying capacity of his limited acreage.

Friday ended with a lawn chair county music concert provided by Gentry's Rockit City Band of Nashville.

Saturday saw the fourth annual seed stock cowboy auction that included some of the best South Poll cow/calf pairs, bulls and heifers the breed has to offer. All the animals were consigned by association members.

The top-selling cow/calf pair was Lot 5 and 5A, consigned by Bent Tree Farms. The cow was sired by Bull 5447, an outstanding son of one of Teddy's great cows, B0442. The high bidder at \$6,800 was J.A. Rummel of Rummel Farms, Oscar, La. The top-selling heifer - Lot 8 - was also a Bent Tree consignment.

This April, 2012, daughter of Casanova (RH60) went to Steve Stephenson of Santa Fe, Texas, for \$3,300.

In addition to taking part in the management-practices forum the day before, Greg Judy also led his annual pasture walk Saturday, pointing out how mob grazing can help live-stock producers with their bottom line.

On Saturday the guest speaker was Tennessee veterinarian R.P. Cooke, who spoke about his "no frills, no hay and no equipment" cattle operation that he patterned after that of his friend Gordon Hazard.

Charter board members Greg Judy and Ralph Voss were inducted into the South Poll Hall of Fame and were honored with a presentation at the field day. Gentry, who chose both men for the award said both "were instrumental in promoting the breed above and beyond the call of duty. They have been pioneers in promoting the breed to other people," he said.

Judy and Voss join Bent Tree Farms herdsman Dave Roberts and association secretary/treasurer Jerry Voss, who were inducted last year. All four names are engraved on a plaque to hang at Bent Tree Farms, the home of the South Poll breed, in Fort Payne, Alabama.

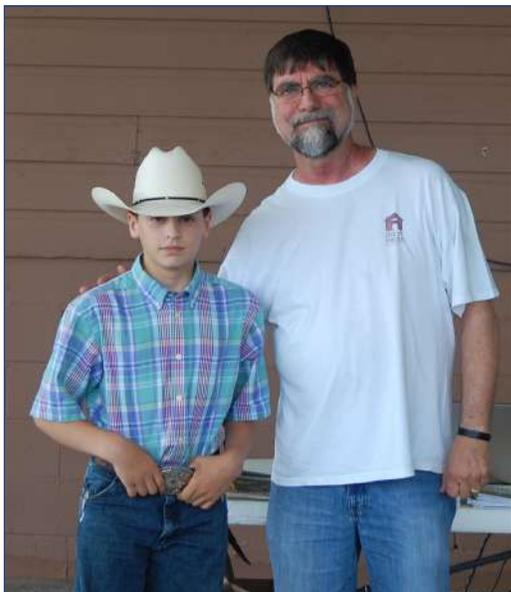
The board, for the first time, awarded a \$500 scholarship to a junior board member and the award went to Reuben Hendricks of Koshkonong, Missouri. This was the first year that Reuben's parents, Trent and Rachel, attended the field day. Reuben is one of their six children.

To be a junior member, youngsters must be between the ages of eight and 18 and their parents must be members of the association.

The association also gave away a three-quarter South Poll heifer as a door prize and the winner was Holly Prosize of Loudon, Tenn. Prosize was offered the opportunity to have the heifer auctioned off if she chose not to accept the heifer, but she was adamant about taking the heifer home with her. Did she want to auction it off? "No way," she said, smiling ear to ear.

Those attending the fifth annual field day came from Florida, Louisiana, Ohio, Missouri, Mississippi, Kentucky, Georgia, Arkansas, Illinois, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas and Alabama.

Two new board members, Doyle Unruh of Georgia and Andy Sumners of Alabama, went on the board with three-year terms after their election at the annual meeting which was held a day prior to the field day. On the following pages are some of the many scenes from the field day.



Reuben Hendricks of Koshkonong, Mo., who was awarded the \$500 scholarship given to junior members, is shown here with Teddy Gentry, association president.



The crowd was attentive for the many presentations made during the field day, as well as at the auction.







Following are some of the many scenes from the field day.





