



photo courtesy Becky Szarzynski

SOUTH POLL NEWS FALL/WINTER 2023

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Teddy Talks

Keeping everyone on the same page in a breed association is not an easy task.

It's a free country and of course everyone is entitled to their opinion. The more growth a breed enjoys ..the more people get involved ..it becomes increasingly difficult to keep everyone happy.

Old ways are thought by some to become outdated , and rules and regulations that have brought the breed this far are challenged . Uniting the breeders for the good of the breed going forward remains my ambition at almost 72 years old!

The unique simplicity of cows eating grass and measuring the maternal longevity without all the hype of the purebred crowd is refreshing to most of our breeders. Let's make it our goal to teach the truth about making money in the cattle business to our young folks.

It's really not that complicated what folks like Greg Judy and others teach. We now have data that supports this fact that grazing management can play an important role in putting carbon back in the soil. I believe South Poll can be a important part of this movement going forward. If you have doubts, check out the "Roots So Deep" or Carbon Cowboys channel on YouTube hosted by my friend Peter Byck.

Respectively,

Teddy Gentry



Photo Contest!
We want to see your
BEST Photos!

Submit your ORIGINAL photos to Ann at
southpollgrasscattle@gmail.com
for publication in the Newsletter
or maybe even some of our
advertising!

Winners will receive a prize
from SPGCA!

News & Updates!

January 31, 2024

Whole Herd Reports due back to office

Annual Dues due--check your emails!

February 2024

Field Day details coming soon!

March 2024

Field Day animal selection committee begins recruiting animals

Newsletter Submission Deadline 03.15.24



Congratulations!

Kaylee Adams ~ Mumford, AL
The latest Junior to receive
a South Poll heifer from Bent Tree Farms!



From the Kitchen

Beef Wellington
All Recipes/Marla

2 ½ pounds beef tenderloin
4 tablespoons butter, softened, divided
2 tablespoons butter
1 onion, chopped
½ cup sliced fresh mushrooms
2 ounces liver paté
salt and pepper to taste
1 (17.5 ounce) package frozen puff pastry, thawed
1 large egg yolk, beaten
1 (10.5 ounce) can beef broth
2 tablespoons red wine

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C).

Place beef tenderloin in a baking dish. Spread 2 tablespoons softened butter over beef.

Bake in the preheated oven until browned, 10 to 15 minutes. Remove beef from the pan and reserve pan juices; allow beef to cool completely.

Increase oven temperature to 450 degrees F (230 degrees C).

Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a skillet over medium heat. Sauté onion and mushrooms in butter for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool.

Mix paté and remaining 2 tablespoons softened butter together in a bowl; season with salt and pepper. Spread paté mixture over beef. Top with onion and mushroom mixture. Roll out puff pastry dough to about 1/4-inch thickness and place beef in the center.

Fold up and seal all the edges, making sure the seams are not too thick. Place beef in a 9x13-inch baking dish, cut a few slits in the top of dough, and brush with egg yolk.

Bake in the preheated oven for 10 minutes. Reduce heat to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C) and continue baking until pastry is a rich, golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes.

An instant-read thermometer inserted into the center should read between 122 to 130 degrees F (50 to 54 degrees C) for medium rare. Set aside to rest.

Meanwhile, place reserved pan juices in a small saucepan over high heat. Stir in beef broth and red wine; boil until slightly reduced, about 5 minutes. Strain and serve with beef.



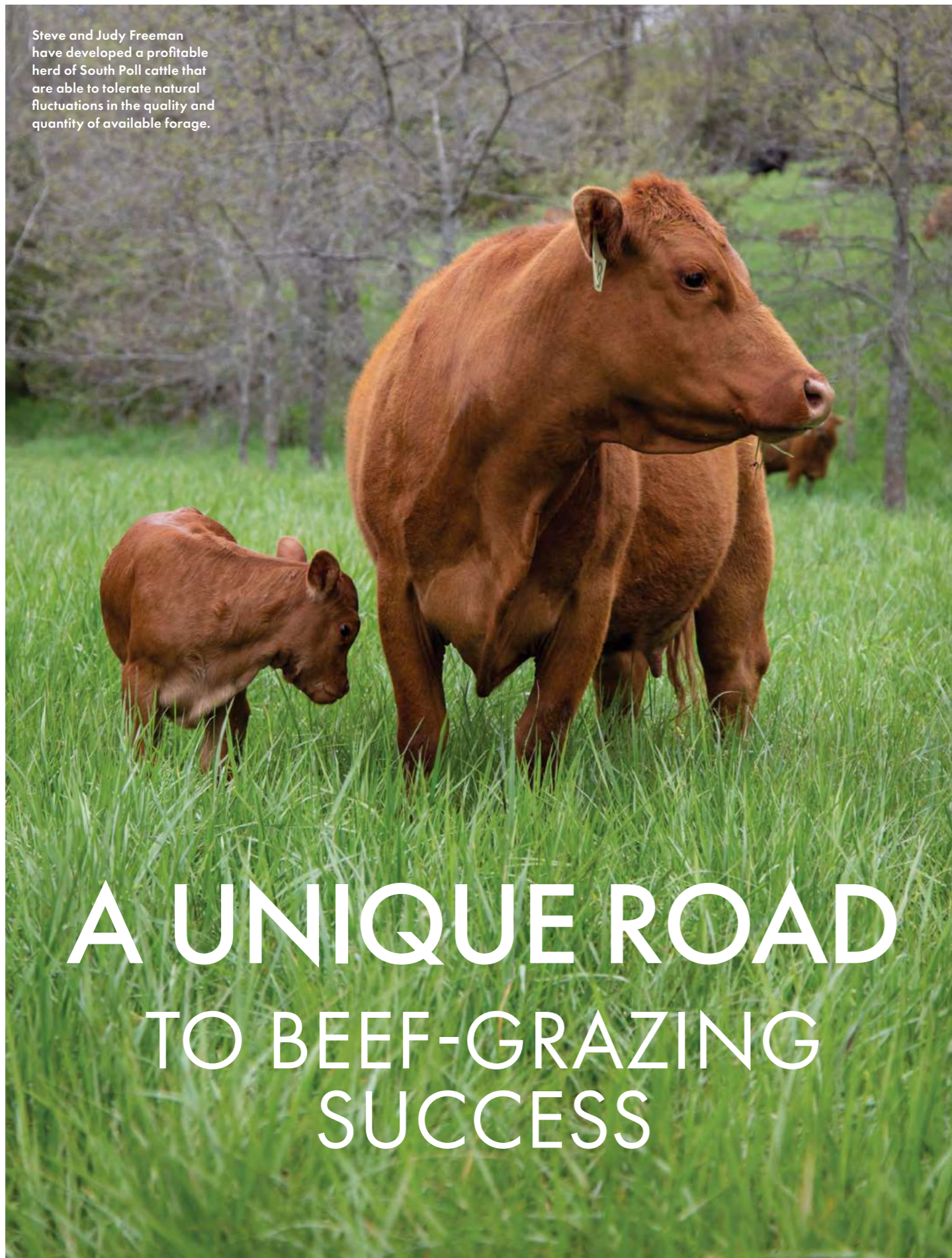
PLEASE

Help us out!

A survey has been recently sent out on
Field Day!

Please check your emails and let us
know how we are doing!

Steve and Judy Freeman have developed a profitable herd of South Poll cattle that are able to tolerate natural fluctuations in the quality and quantity of available forage.



A UNIQUE ROAD TO BEEF-GRAZING SUCCESS

All photos Mike Rankin

by Mike Rankin

THE South Poll cows were red and slick. At their side — an equal number of 1-month-old or younger calves already grazing on spring fescue in a Savannah-like setting. Their owners and caretakers, Steve and Judy Freeman, both admired and surveyed the herd while perched on their respective utility vehicles. Had the late Grant Wood been there, he would have broken out his paint brushes for an updated American Gothic.

Steve and Judy Freeman were city kids by any definition. The former was raised in Long Beach, Calif., while the latter grew up in Los Angeles. Each had some animal lovers in their ancestral bloodlines, and both matured with a desire to be around animals. So, how did two free-spirited West Coast youngsters end up in Hartville, Mo., owning and operating one of the most highly regarded grazing operations in the United States? Read on.

The couple met in San Diego, where Judy was the manager of a thoroughbred racehorse ranch and Steve was an employee. “I considered a good date as going to the bookstore,” Steve said. “It was there that we started reading about — and became interested in — homesteading.”

Soon after, with no planned destination and some saved dollars, they left California in a 1-ton van with two 80-pound dogs as passengers. They meandered around the country for close to a year, living in the van. At one point, a friend told them about the Ozark Mountains, and it sounded like an area that would meet their minimalist needs. Eventually, that’s where they headed and arrived in the area’s rolling hills in 1978. They were married during that same year.

“We knew Judy could always get a job with horses, and her employer would have to hire me because I was a part of the package,” Steve chuckled. “We ended up in Springfield, Mo., where Judy was hired at a purebred Arabian ranch while we remained living in our van.”

Eventually, the Freemans bought a small 86-acre property near where they reside and farm today, about 50 miles east of Springfield. They started a Grade C goat dairy where Judy milked 30 goats by hand and trained border collies while her husband worked on a neighboring beef farm.

Steve explained, “We were good with numbers and knew we could make it

work. Our plan was to pay it off in a year. Then, about six months in, our milk processor put a quota on us and cut our price in half. That’s when we started raising some calves to supplement our income.”

While working on a beef farm and catching cattle for people with dogs that they had trained, Steve got really interested in grass and farming. “My employer was a great mentor who taught me a lot,” he said.



“We try to match our cows’ nutritional needs with the available forage,” Steve said. “Calving in mid-April and May helps to do that.”

Steve also took a part-time job as a milk tester, thinking that he could learn about dairying, which might provide the couple’s ticket to independence. What he determined was that if there was a way — other than dairying — to make a living by farming, they should pursue it. “The early 1980s was not a time that inspired you to want to get into dairy farming,” he said.

Although the farm economy was in shambles, the young couple had saved money from an inheritance and figured it was a good time to buy a farm because land values had crashed. That was the beginning of their foray into the beef business. They sold their 86 acres in 1987 and bought the 468-acre farm they now own and operate, expanding it to 900 grazeable acres. “That first year, we

bought cow-calf pairs in March — the bottom of the market — and sold steers early the next year for what we paid for the pair,” Judy recalled. “Our timing was just blind luck,” Steve added.

The Freemans currently have 180 brood cows, breed 60 to 80 home-raised yearling heifers, and also purchase stockers to graze with the heifers. “If we have a drought year, we don’t want to be put in a position of selling our breeding stock,” Steve said. “So, we like to keep a cushion and protect ourselves. However, we also want to utilize our grass during the good times. That’s where the stockers come into play, and it’s worked really well. We can sell those stockers in a week if we have to,” he added.

Trials and errors

Steve noted that there’s been a lot of experimentation to match the right number of animals to acres. “When you’re dealing with biology, that sweet spot is a moving target. But you’ve got to learn how to keep the canoe afloat and not drown in those dry years. Right now, we’re at about 3 animal units per grazeable acre. We’ve been under 2 animal units per acre, but that required feeding a lot more hay.”

The Freemans stopped making their own hay about 20 years ago and now purchase what they need. “When we sold the baler, that was liberation day for me,” Steve said, noting that he was making his own hay plus doing custom baling for neighbors.

“Haymaking took a lot of time away from our cows and grass. The cows have to be the number one priority when you’re in this business, and making hay just kept me from things I needed to be doing,” Steve said. “Admittedly, there have been dry years when we’ve had to pull the cattle off pasture and feed purchased hay in a sacrifice pasture. Afterward, we just renovate the pasture once conditions improve.”

Toxicity mitigation

“All of our fescue is toxic,” Steve said. “We calve from mid-April through May, trying to match our cows’ nutritional needs and availability to the grass. Judy moves the cows — usually that means every day, but it could also be up

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With abundant forage soon after birth, the Freemans' calves learn quickly how to graze.

to every three days. We try to take at least a third of the plant off each spring on all of our pastures to reduce seed-head formation.”

If needed, Steve will also clip pastures high to control seedhead development and promote tillering. That said, he no longer worries if some of their pastures get too tall. They’ve learned how to still use those pastures and also enjoy the wildlife benefits that taller pastures can offer. The Freemans don’t fertilize their pastures. “We feel like we get enough nitrogen cycling from manure and mineralization to keep pastures productive,” Steve said.

Through years of trial and error, the Freemans now have their 88 pastures fenced in rectangles or squares and use polywire and step-in posts to portion available forage to the cattle within the paddocks. “Flexibility is essential in this business,” Steve asserted, “and even those who don’t start that way eventually get to that point. We have about 120 watering points and strip-graze in the winter.”

Over time, their pastures have become more diverse, and their cattle often tend to graze the nonfescue species first. “We actually see more fescue toxicity effects in the fall when the pastures revert to a higher percentage of tall fescue,” Judy said.

Cattle are grazed the entire year, but the Freemans use bale grazing on stock-piled fescue to slow movement during the winter. Clover is also frost seeded into pastures. “I love to sow seed,” Steve



Red clover is frost seeded to boost forage nutritional value and provide nitrogen for the tall fescue pastures.

said. “I’ll sow ryegrass where the pastures get damaged, and I’ve also seeded some chicory. I’ve been trying to grow warm-season grasses. That’s still a work in progress. We’ve had some failures and successes, but I still want to get more established,” he added.

Settled on South Polls

The long road of experimentation with grass has also extended to the cows. Through the years, there have been periods of Angus and Beefmaster, but the Freemans finally settled on South Polls.

“Before we switched, our cows probably weighed 1,300 to 1,600 pounds,” Steve said. “Calving ease became a real problem, especially for the first-calf heifers.”

It was Judy who suggested they do something different, so they bought some South Poll bulls to breed their heifers.

“Those bulls were small and gentle and didn’t seem to be affected by the heat like the Angus were,” Judy said.

Steve added, “They were nonstop breed-

ers, gained weight, and I swear, had a smile on their faces during the whole breeding season. It was amazing.”

The Freemans really liked the South Poll-Beefmaster cross and soon started keeping the calves after initially selling them. “Since then, we’ve been exclusively South Poll,” Judy said. “The South Polls really do well in our Missouri heat and have excellent reproductive performance. That’s important because we are breeding in July and August.”

Steve said that they keep all of the heifers and sell an equal number of cows to interested buyers, mostly for breeding stock. They also keep a few bulls to use and sell. Animals that don’t breed on time, or don’t perform well in their system, are freely culled.

“In the beef cattle business, you’ve got to be pretty bare bones. You have to increase your margins, and you’ve got to increase your turnover,” Steve said. “All of this hinges on how you manage your grass and your ability to keep the cows’ nutrition and intake needs in sync with grass growth.”

It’s been over 40 years since the Freemans left the West Coast shimmering in the rearview mirror of their 1-ton van. The journey since has been fraught with numerous trials and errors. These days, there are still challenges, but also a much higher level of contentment as the Freemans are more easily able to enjoy the cows, the grass, the plant diversity, and wildlife that all permeate their highly regarded beef operation. ●

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SOUTHEAST SOUTH POLL SALE

Online Auction

Hosted by Creech Farms

APRIL 13, 2024

A portion of Sale Proceeds will be donated to the SPGCA



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The Classified Section of our website is available to the public for viewing. Unfortunately, that opens up an opportunity for some folks that may be up to 'no good'. Please make sure that when you are dealing with a potential buyer that you are using caution. Do your due diligence and homework to make sure the deal is above board.

All transactions that result from the Classified Section of our website are between buyer and seller.

There is also someone who is sending emails impersonating Teddy and other Board Members requesting that you contact them immediately and get some version of a cash card or other electronic payment. **PLEASE DO NOT DO THIS!!** Under no circumstance will any Board Member contact you via email requesting that you get them cash cards or electronic payment. If you look closely at these emails, there are usually some strange verbiage or misspelled words. When in doubt, go ahead and forward these requests to the office.

OFFICE UPDATE

By: Ann Demerath

Hello from the office!

WOW! Did y'all ever knock it out of the park for Field Day! We had a RECORD number of attendance and a record number for the Junior Speaking Contest! We had just over 730 folks registered to attend the Field Day and there were over THIRTY littles that competed in the Speaking Contest! The sale was incredible and we could not have done it without you!!

I would like to say a special thanks to our hosts, Doug, Kathy and Josh Creech for providing such an awesome farm to have our 15th Field Day!

Things have been busy here in the office the last few weeks--all of the Whole Herd Reports have been sent out and are due back in the office by January 31, 2024. Please note that not all members will receive the report--you must have had cattle in the system by October 9th, 2023 and be a paying member of the Association. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

We have some exciting things coming your way in 2024! We are working on an online shop where you will have access to ordering all the cool things we have at Field Day year round! Don't worry, we will be debuting all the new things for the year at the Field Day like always! We are also working on a new way for you to register and transfer cattle that ultimately should be easier for all of you!

Quick update on holiday hours--I will be on limited hours through the holiday week--please email or leave a message and I will get back to you after the holidays.

Plans are starting to come together for the 2024 Field Day- please keep an eye out on all of our social media for updates. Our hosts are working hard to get hotels and other details lined out, and we will be making announcements as they become available.

Quick update on numbers for the year end--to 12.19.23

Registrations: 3386
Transfers: 2578
New Members: 116

Y'all are killing it! With that, I would like to wish you all a very blessed holiday season and a blessed 2024!

Happy Grazing!
Ann



Season's Greetings!!

Ann Demerath

Please Don't Forget!!

Email your favorite recipes, photos and anything else you would like to see in the SPGCA Newsletter to the office!
THERE ARE PRIZES!



ONLINE REGISTRATION TIPS!

Many of you have been utilizing the online registration tool on the website. Please reference the tips below to help you have a more complete and correct set of papers.

* Make sure you have a Livestock Genetics Account set up. This is DIFFERENT than what you have set up for the website. If you don't have your LG account set up, you will need the following information.

1. Member number--5 digits usually and is found on your welcome letter or any registration in your name.
2. Username--please use first name.last name or some combination of that so you are easily identified by the office--it makes it easier for the office to find your information.
3. Choose your password and make a note of it.

Online registration is fairly easy! Here are a few more things that you will want to do when you are getting ready to register animals!

1. Fill out the spreadsheet under cattle/cattle forms on the website and print it off--all of your information will be in one handy spot to make the process easier.
2. Once you have your information compiled and you are logged in click Calving Sheet tab.
3. You can choose to enter from Active Dams tab or enter the calves individually.
4. Naming a calf--this is how calves are named in the system: Herd Prefix Sire TAG number Dam TAG number Calf TAG number. Please make sure to put a space in between each section of the name Example: CSR 4440 12345 2201 If you are choosing to add a name of calf, please do so after the calf tag number with NO space between.
5. Once you are all done entering information, you must click the Proceed to (year) calf crop-this is located at the top of the screen and is underlined.
6. You may see some errors--some of the more common ones are 'dam not owned at time of conception and no permit on file' If you see this error, it is most likely due to a transfer date conflict OR you are trying to register a calf that you weren't responsible for the breeding of. If you see this error, you need to contact the office and we will resolve it. Another common error is 'dam had calf within 274 days' this is also an error that will need to be looked at by the office. Most commonly, the calf is already registered, or there is a birth date conflict.
7. When you are done entering in all of your information and have hit the SYNC button, please email the office and let us know how many animals you think you have entered along with any work order number you have noticed. That way, we know you have something in the system and can track it down as well as make sure we know your order is complete.
8. We will review your order, check for any errors, print and bill.
9. A couple of other things to note: We don't use the Livestock Genetics billing option--if you see a 'balance due' on your account in LG- please don't be concerned, all of your billing will come either on a QuickBooks statement on paper with your order, or in your email if we are not mailing you anything.
10. On the website, if you haven't already done so, please set up your website profiles. If you click [this link](#) it will take you to the setup link. Again, please use the first name.last name option when choosing your username so we can easily find your member name if we need to help you out. Take the time to customize your profile with pictures, bio, and social media links. The more links we have amongst us, the more powerful this tool will be for all of us!
11. As always, I am here to help you! If I don't answer, leave me a message and I will get back to you as soon as possible! I am trying to take a couple days a week away from the phone so I can dedicate more time to entering in data, but I WILL call you back!



**South Poll Grass Cattle Association
New Membership Application**

Name to be on Certificate _____

Farm Name _____

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Address _____

Email Address _____

Phone _____

Cell _____

Herd Letters:

Choice 1 _____

Choice 2 _____

Choice 3 _____

Email List Opt in-please check box to be added to the South Poll newsletter email list

OFFICE USE ONLY: _____

Membership Fees \$100.00 year.

Please send check or money order to:
South Poll Grass Cattle Association
5235 Gravel Point Road
Mountain Grove, MO 65711
256-996-8355

Signature _____ Date _____
By signing this form you agree to abide by the rules and regulations and the by laws of South Poll Grass Cattle Association

WITHOUT THE HERBIVORE, GRASS IS WITHOUT VALUE. WITHOUT THE VALUABLE COVER OF GRASS, THE SOIL IS WITHOUT LIFE. WITHOUT LIFE, THE TERRESTRIAL WORLD BECOMES VALUELESS AND SIMPLY UNHAPPY. THE UNIFORM DIVERSITY OF THE MEADOWLAND DEMONSTRATES THAT VALUE CO-CREATES THE VALUABLE VIA THE TOOL OF TIME -GRIFFITH.



In the next issue

- Teddy Talks
- Field Day News
- More!

Photo: Troy Lohman, Illinois

Let's keep in touch

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