

Controlling Costs to Improve Profit Potential

**Jim Werner – Werner Family Angus
Diagonal, IA producer**

Jim and Ann Werner Registered Angus is a family operation. Both Jim and Ann grew up on farms and are fortunate that their four children and their families are all part of the business.

Our Children:

Craig and Becky (Werner) Hays--Craig is from Mississippi, where he grew up on a ranch. He later went to Mississippi State University and graduated with an Animal Science degree. He earned his masters degree in ruminant nutrition from Auburn University. Craig is the owner of Critical Insights, a beef cattle ultrasound scanning business. Becky graduated from Northwest Missouri State University with a degree in Animal Science. She now owns UltraInsights Processing Lab, a centralized ultrasound processing lab for interpreting ultrasound images. Craig and Becky live in Maryville, MO, where they operate their ultrasound businesses.

Will and Bonnie (Werner) Larson-- Will grew up on a row-crop farm near Clearfield, Iowa. He graduated from Northwest Missouri State University with a degree in Ag Business and now works with his father on the farm. Will owns an interest in Critical Insights and travels the country scanning beef cattle. He also farms with his brothers. Bonnie graduated from Iowa State University with a degree in Biology. She works for UltraInsights Processing Lab as well as Critical Insights. Recently, she began serving as office manager for Werner Feed Efficiency. Will and Bonnie help with cattle management and live on a farm nearby.

Clint Werner--Clint graduated from Indian Hills Community College with a degree in Diesel Mechanics. He works on the farm. Clint gets to do much of the mechanical work on our machinery as well as helping with the cattle and horses. He is also in charge of the hunting. Clint and Joe operate Werner Feed Efficiency testing center, testing seedstock cattle for feed efficiency. Clint also lives on a farm nearby.

Joe and Heather Werner--Joe graduated from Southwestern Community College (SWCC) with a degree in Ag Business. Joe is very involved with the ranch work and takes a lead role in data collection. He co-manages Werner Feed Efficiency. His wife Heather works off the farm, but spends as much time as possible helping with daily activity. They live on a farm nearby.

Family is important to us. We thank God that our business has grown, that our children live nearby, that we live in a caring and Christian community, and that we can all work doing what we love.

Our herd originated in 1928 when Ann's father, Wayne Lacock of Farmhamville, Iowa bought his first registered Angus cows. In 1977, we bought some yearling heifers and later some bred

cows from Wayne and established our cow herd in Ringgold County, Iowa. Since that time, we have purchased only two cows from other herds.

By keeping our own heifers generation after generation, we have developed a very strong, consistent genetic base. Today we have a 400 head cow herd. We have used AI sires to introduce new blood lines into our cow herd. We select AI sires on the basis of optimum traits rather than extremes.

We have emphasized forage utilization on our operation, including extended grazing of stockpiled fescue. Our goal is for the cows to do the work as much as possible, and limit the amount of stored or purchased feeds. We do use high quality minerals and some co-products to supplement the cattle on grass.

The Werner Beef Development Center tests bulls, heifers, and steers from our herd and for other seedstock producers in the Midwest. In the first year of operation, we have tested Limousin, Hereford, Angus, Simmental, Gelbvieh, Red Angus, Charolais, and Peidmontese coming from eight states. The bunk system is patterned off the system at Iowa State University, and the bunks are manufactured by ID-ology, a company from Wisconsin.

The test is designed in compliance with Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) guidelines or else those set forth by the breed association. Each group of cattle is tested for at least 90 days, including a 21-day warm-up period which is designed to allow the cattle to become accustomed to eating one at a time per bunk. One bunk services 6-8 head, although cattle can eat from any of the bunks in the pen. The cattle are weighed multiple times throughout the test to establish a more precise rate of gain. The amount of feed each animal consumes is also recorded.

We think as technology improves feed efficiency and cost management, including forage utilization, will continue to be the key for success in our industry.