



# NICHOLS

NEWSLETTER

## A few THOUGHTS



*j. david nichols*

**F**irst, I would like to direct everyone to “Cowboys You Can Count On” (page 4), and read about the many accomplishments of someone who always avoided the spotlight, my wife Phyllis. We lost Phyllis on September 23rd, which is a loss of my spouse, friend and business partner. Your outpourings have been a great tribute to her and a comfort to me. Thank you!

Phyllis was never one to feel sorry for herself, and was always moving forward despite her circumstances.

So despite how much I miss her, now it is left for me to follow her example and move forward as she would have expected and insisted.

One of these items we have long had in the hopper here at Nichols Farms was to look at gathering feed efficiency data. Phyllis and I saw the first feed efficiency data being collected on our honeymoon in 1966 when we stopped at Wye Plantation, where they were measuring bulls’ intake in individual pens to determine feed efficiency.

Since our first bulls that were “put on test” in 1958, we have measured the average daily gain and cost of gain for the entire group. We and most others thought that “appetite was a good thing” without regard to efficiency.

In 1968, Phyllis and I were taking

— Continued on page two



- Jim Gregory -

- Dave Trowbridge -

### Gregory Feedlots - a Profile of a Friend and Neighbor of Nichols Farms -

**G**regory Feedlots is one of the most respected and accomplished yards in the country, with an office whose walls are adorned with the many recognitions and awards they have received over the years. The feed yard’s accomplishments are due to a combination of the detailed work that needs to occur everyday to assure success, as well as stepping back and assessing the system from conception to harvest. This is accomplished with the teamwork of the owners the Gregory Brothers, Grant and Jim, who are fourth generation SW Iowa farmers, and the 40+ year veteran feedlot manager, David Trowbridge. Together with a dedicated, professional staff, they assure the long-term success of the feedlot and the customers who feed their cattle with them. Put together, they have designed a whole program working towards continuous improvement and profitability they refer to as the Gregory Performance Management Program (GPMP).

Gregory Feedlots was one of the first Certified Angus Beef Partner Feedlots in the country, recognized as Feedlot of the Year and Progressive Partner of the Year, and Trowbridge has received the CAB Quality Assurance Award. Trowbridge is also a popular speaker on programs around the country, and sits on the board of Certified Hereford Beef. When asked about his priorities in life, he will quickly tell you that family and faith come first, but he will add with a chuckle, that few people would realize it because all his

family seems to talk about is cattle. He even keeps a herd of registered Herefords on the side and has served on the American Hereford Associations board of directors.

For Trowbridge, it is about feeding quality cattle in terms of genetics, management prior to arrival at the yard, and then making the most out of those cattle in the feeding phase. They are also firm believers in targeting cattle towards premium products that will provide the most return on investment.

Trowbridge says the ultimate goal is that an animal in their yard never has a bad day. That means everything has to be right: cattle health, quality feed ingredients, expertly formulated rations, bunk management, low stress cattle handling, excellent facilities, pen management, harvesting cattle based on maximizing biological and economic efficiency, collecting all the data possible through the carcass.

Grant Gregory’s main job is to oversee the long-term strategic management of the feedlot and thinks that one of the fallacies of the industry is cattle are treated as lots instead of individuals. It is through the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the individual cattle they are feeding, that the whole system can be improved.

That is where the GPMP comes in. First is the background on what led to GPMP. The family has a long tradition of feeding cattle, so the profit drivers in the yard include health and feed efficiency.

— Continued on page three

# A few THOUGHTS

— Continued from page one

our Angus herd sire Emulous 872, which we co-owned with Carlton Corbin, on the bull's annual September trip to Fittstown, Oklahoma to take his turn breeding Carlton's cows.

I was pretty smug... As our bulls were winning in test stations, and Nichols sired steers were gaining and converting better than the "brand X" sired steers in our customers' feedlots.

We were also producing our share of Performance Registry International's Certified Meat Sires. But, what Bill Corbin (Carlton's son) was doing "tripped my trigger!" And it was not in their pastures or barns. It was in his farm shop. He had invented and built the first Pin Pointer unit which accurately measured how much each bull was eating.

One unit serving a whole pen of bulls bothered me (and the bulls) a great deal. I firmly believed they were measuring social dominance almost as much as feed efficiency and still do.

I knew that ultimately, we would have to measure the in-puts as well as out-puts to determine real \$\$\$ values.

My wise dad would say, "you've defined the problem, now get to work and solve it." We've purchased a \*C Lock feed intake system that weighs the feed each individual bull eats per feeding, and weighs him each time he takes a drink of water.

The past two decades, most seedstock breeders have selected for terminal traits, i.e. \$B. A feedlot steer or heifer costs you about 180 days of their feed. But you feed and care for their mothers for 365 days.

My life-time goal has been to grow two blades of grass where my dad grew one. And to breed problem-free bulls that sire cattle that eat less and gain more. This technology will enable Nichols Bulls to do it on both your steers and cow herd.

And, I'm going to be around to see it happen! Come see it at our open house private treaty bull sale November 13th.

[\\*https://www.c-lockinc.com/](https://www.c-lockinc.com/)

## BIVI Beef Bulletin

### Win the Lice vs. Dewormer Battle This Year

Joe Gillespie, DVM

Boehringer Ingelheim

[www.bicattlefirst.com](http://www.bicattlefirst.com)



**W**hile cattle producers have a need to grow healthy animals for a successful operation, lice are on a different track and ready to thwart that effort. They are all about making animals miserable, affecting their health and performance.

**T**he good news is that timing of application and proper dosing can make the difference in how your pour-on dewormer takes on lice this season.

**T**he best time may not be the most convenient. Ensuring the pour-on dewormer you're using for external parasites like lice is effective includes applying it when it's going to do the most good. That can be challenging with everything else going on at the ranch.

**I**f you're treating parasites in the fall with an injectable dewormer, that's not going to knock down a lice population, because it's probably not even there yet. Pour-on dewormers are the most effective for lice, and they should be timed right before the levels of parasites are at their highest.

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**P**roper application makes all the difference.

**C**arefully apply the product with an applicator gun along the midline (over the top of the back of each animal). Begin at the withers, and pour all the way down to the tailhead in a narrow strip to reduce runoff. Make sure the entire dose gets on the animal, not on the sides of the chute or on the handlers, to maximize efficacy.

**T**he dosage should also be adequate for the size and weight class of the animal being treated. Calculate the volume of pour-on product to be administered based on each animal's weight, using a scale whenever possible. Weight tape or a cull weight slip are also options.

**D**on't forget to consult your local veterinarian when designing or adjusting your deworming program. He or she can help you identify key parasites affecting your herd and recommend deworming products and protocols to optimize herd performance.

**What You Sow, You Will Reap. What You Give, You Get. What You See in Others... Exists in You.**





### *Gregory continued from page one*

Plus performance on the rail. All of these are a combination of management and genetics, so the aspects that are heritable will respond to selection. Grant also brings a unique perspective to GPMP. He combines his off-farm business experience, while maintaining ownership in the feedlot that includes both helping make the big picture

### *Grant Gregory*

decision, as well as owning and feeding his own cattle.

Off the farm, Grant entered the business world working for some of the largest and most prestigious accounting and financial firms in the nation, eventually becoming chairman of the board of Touch Ross & Co. However, he cut his teeth in the agriculture sector in the late 1960s doing the accounting for major companies like the then new Iowa Beef Packers (IBP), which is now Tyson, as well as one of the country's largest feedlots. Working with IBP's Currier Holman, he witnessed the development and efficiency of these new plants and boxed beef, which magnified the difference in value between carcasses. He also became an expert in risk management, hedging, retained ownership and securitizing investment in cattle. However, the whole puzzle didn't come together until they started feeding Nichols' cattle, and realized the tremendous difference superior genetics makes in the system. All of a sudden, Grant could see how the whole system fit together with the realization that the most profitable cattle start with the genetics. That's when the GPMP crystallized.

The GPMP system collects a full complement of data, including all the data points on the genetics, progeny, feedlot and carcass. These data can then be turned into information that provides recommendations to drive an operation's culling and replacement protocol, management practices, nutritional programs, vaccination programs, and marketing practices. In all, they think they can make as much as an additional \$500 a cow in a five-year period. ([www.gregoryfeedlots.com](http://www.gregoryfeedlots.com)). And, Grant sees this as just the beginning. With the power of genomics, the ability exists to select for things like cattle that are less susceptible to Bovine Respiratory Disease and are more feed efficient which will change the landscape of the cattle industry.

With all the changes Gregory Feedlots have seen and been a part of over the years, they think the industry has only scratched the surface of the efficiency it will achieve in the future. As this future becomes a reality, they plan on being in the thick of its development, and working with genetic experts like Nichols Farms, they are excited about what the future holds in store.



The Iowa State Block and Bridle Club is a student-led organization that aims to provide industry knowledge and experience to students interested in pursuing the various phases of Animal Science as a future career while promoting professionalism and a higher scholastic standard. The 100th National Block and Bridle Convention was held in Ames, Iowa in April 2021.

Participants who attended got to listen and learn from industry speakers, go on tours highlighting agriculture across Iowa, and network with other students and teachers from different universities. \*My role within the club is being the Sr. CALS (College of Agriculture and Life Sciences) Council Representative on the Executive Officer Team. *\*by Maggie Vogl*

# Nichols Farms

## Private Treaty Herd Bull Sale

Saturday, November 13<sup>th</sup> - Noon Lunch -

Angus - Simmental - South Devon - Nichols Hybrids

**W**e're offering the yearling herd bulls that pasture bred our cows and heifers this year. These Proven Performer Power Bulls have amazing weaning weights, rate of gains, yearling weight and \$Value ERTs. They rank at or near the top in the seed stock industry, plus they're slick haired and tolerant to Fescue.



*dave nichols*



**- Nichols Blackbird W186 with her SX calf -**

They are the "best of the best", That's why we used them. Their sons will be in our bull barn and for sale next year and their daughters will be grazing our unclipped Fescue pastures.

We were the very first herd (1987) to utilize ultrasound to measure IMF% (marbling) and lean yield grade. We also continue to be the leader in utilizing DNA technology. The past thirteen years Nichols herd sires have been DNA profiled for several product and performance traits. About 40 Nichols Bulls have stood in major A.I. Studs the past 50 years. Many of them were offered in the Bull Extra sales. Call or visit - These bulls are being offered for sale at 1:30 November 13<sup>th</sup>. Select one or more of these bulls. They are semen checked and ready to work in your herd - \$100 off the price, if you pick them up.

**Bull Barn: 641-369-2829**

**Ross cell: 641-745-5241**

**Dave home: 712-762-3810**

**Nichols Farms**  
*Superior Beef Genetics*

**Bull Sale Catalog - [www.nicholsfarms.biz](http://www.nicholsfarms.biz)**

## For Sale: *Superior Beef Genetics*

from: **Nichols Farms - Iowa Nichols Genetic Source Partners**

Angus - Simmental - South Devon - Hybrids - Composites

- ◆ 250 open Short Yearling Heifers— available December 1<sup>st</sup>
- ◆ 150 Composite heifers - A.I. to New Standard D30 CE - Clean up bred Nichols Bulls
- ◆ 220 Angus cross heifers. Bred to Nichols CE bulls. Ultra-sound calving date 3/1/21
- ◆ 150 Angus cross heifers. Bred to Nichols CE bulls. Calving date 3/15/22 In Minnesota
- ◆ 100 Angus cows 3 - 8 year olds, bred to Nichols Angus bulls. In South Dakota
- ◆ **Check out the full listing at— [www.nicholsfarms.biz](http://www.nicholsfarms.biz)**

## In Her Loving Memory



**P**hyllis Ellen Nichols, 77, of Anita, passed away Sept. 23, 2021 at her home. She was born June 20, 1944.

Phyllis met her future husband Dave at the Adair County Fair while helping their younger brothers and sisters fit their steers. Her brother, Lans, won Grand Champion and Dave's sister, Evelyn, won Reserve Grand Champion.

Phyllis exited Iowa State University in May of her junior year because of "the best sales pitch Dave ever gave."

For the first half of her married life, she calved 150-200 first calf heifers, and had her own flock of Montadale ewes. Soon after she had babies of her own, she dispersed her flock of sheep.

After the death of Dave's brother Lee in 1982, Phyllis became a full time owner/manager of Nichols Farms, along with Dave and Lee's wife Lillian. Phyllis paid the bills, paid the taxes, issued the payroll, deposited checks, printed invoices, signed checks, handled insurance coverage and claims and purchased cattle supplies. She enjoyed interacting with the Nichols crew, customers and visitors.

She was a great cook, active in many community service projects and known as the "hostess with the mostest."

Survivors include her husband of over 50 years, Dave Nichols; children: Fletcher Nichols and Jennifer Nichols; brother Lans Gibbs; sisters-in-law Edy Hill and Lillian Nichols; several nieces and nephews and two grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents: Audra and Marcella (Sally) Gibbs, Dave's parents: Merrill and Gladys Nichols; sister -in-law Ev Gibbs and brothers-in-law Art Hill and Lee Nichols. *by Jennifer Nichols*



**by Brian Fieser Ph.D.**

*Beef Field Nutritionist, ADM Animal Nutrition, Inc*

## How important is feed efficiency?

In a word, VERY! For most cow/calf producers, the buyer of your calves can use feed efficiency (either known from experience or assumed) in combination with projected ration cost and projected selling price, to determine what they can pay for a set of calves.

Knowing the superiority of a set of calves in converting feed to beef can make them more valuable. This knowledge can come from records of feed efficiency of previous calf crops or even knowing the genomic merit of a set of calves via DNA testing.

The good news is that feed efficiency is considered sufficiently heritable to respond to genetic selection, meaning sourcing seedstock with superior feed efficiency should translate into the future calf crops. Feed efficiency is the amount of feed consumed divided by the amount of gain produced, typically expressed as a ratio. Historically speaking, cattle have been considered to have a feed efficiency value around 7:1, meaning for every 7 lbs of feed consumed, 1 lb of body weight will be gained.

Younger, lighter weight cattle tend to exceed the standard 7:1 feed conversion, while more mature, heavier cattle (such as finishing feedyard cattle) will generally be at or above this standard. Modern genetics and feeding programs are often able to improve upon this number. Previous years of feed efficiency records

from Nichols Farms shows conclusively that when we breed better cattle and feed them better (see previous newsletter articles on AminoGain®) we can make tremendous progress in improving the feed efficiency of our calf crops.

One limitation of genetic selection for feed efficiency is that feed efficiency is typically assigned based on an individual animal's weight gain and the assumption that all individuals in a pen ate the average amount. We know what happens when we make assumptions! This is obviously a flawed assumption because we know all individuals in a pen don't eat the same amount.

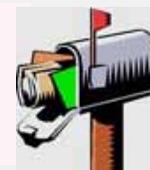
Technological advancements assist thru monitoring individual animal intakes by recording which animal is eating and how much feed is consumed in a meal, and then we can weigh that animal to determine the individual's feed efficiency.

While most everyone can agree that feed efficiency is an extremely important trait for seedstock and has economic importance, not everyone views feed efficiency the same. For instance, research has shown that cattle that are very efficient at converting high forage rations may not be the same individuals that are very efficient at converting high concentrate rations.

The sweet spot is obviously identifying the individuals that excel in both feeding situations. While the cattle industry continues to undergo tremendous genetic advancement with genomic profiling and performance proof, it becomes even more essential that the genetic marvels we are creating are given every chance to express that capability with superior nutrition.

The age old saying that you can't starve a profit into a cow is as true today as it has ever been, because no matter how efficient cattle are, they can't express it without the proper nutritional support.

## LETTERS from you



**from Trevor Williams, Interior, South Dakota**

*We have found the Nichols program delivers a very dependable product that hits the mark on what you are trying to achieve.*

**from Tom Burke, Smithville, Missouri**

*Dave, Congratulations on a great stop on the Iowa Angus tour! It was a genuine highlight to see the Nichols Angus program in its finest hour!*

**from Ken and Ardie Klemish, Anita IA**

*You have changed so many lives in so many ways Dave.... Not just in Adair County, but in Iowa and around the globe through your charitable work.*

*You inspire others to do the same. It's truly an honor to call you a friend for a life time! Stay safe and WELL!*

**from Greg Henderson, Farm Journal, Lenexa KS**

*Dave: I am watching a webinar about Angus Link. I was reminded of the first time I met you—now 40 years later!*

*Where has the time gone? I know I have told you that first meeting (and subsequent visits) had a influence on my career. I remember you telling me "that we have a lot of information on a sack of seed corn, but don't have anything like that for our bulls and need to change that". Eventually we changed from EBVs and saw EPDs replace those. Now we are tracking feeder cattle from pasture to plate. We need to catch up. We need to talk about the last 40 years and where this industry is going for the next 40. Let's schedule a meeting—virtually of course.*

**from Shane Duffy, Iowa State Block and Bridle Club, Sumner Iowa**

*Thank you very much for letting us tour your farm and share a meal with you. It was very kind of you to host us for dinner and learn about the history of Nichols Farms. And especially, hearing about the advancements in the beef industry. Thanks Again!*

## Blue Ribbon Kids & Orphan Twin Calves - Can't Be Beat



Nichols Farms often sell their orphan twins to kids. Aubree Williams, (left) Calf 3rd place with "Murph",

Aivisa Williams, 2nd place with "Darla". Participation ribbon for future 4-H.

Nash Williams, with "Murph" and his Participation ribbon for future 4-H.

# Nichols Farms

*Superior Beef Genetics*

2188 Clay Avenue  
Bridgewater, Iowa 50837-8047  
Nichols Bull Barn: 641-369-2829  
www.nicholsfarms.biz

## - Cattle Feeders -

Wednesday, December 1<sup>st</sup>  
2500 Head of Vaccinated Feeder Calves

*Featuring—*

***Nichols Genetic Source Calves***

- ◆ **Preconditioned**
- ◆ **Sired by Nichols Bulls**
- ◆ **Mostly Weaned**

***Selling—*** At the sale barn: load lots and smaller groups will sell at the live auction and with bidders on the internet.

### ***NOTICE***

To bid on the internet, applications need to be made 24 hours before day of sale to allow for approval time.

You may register to view and bid thru the internet broadcast at [www.cattleusa.com](http://www.cattleusa.com) or print out application and fax to Creston Livestock Auction Inc. at 641-782-3370.

To ***watch*** the sale, you need to register at [www.cattleusa.com](http://www.cattleusa.com) but do not need to fill out a bidder application.

Creston Livestock Auction  
Creston, Iowa



# Nichols Farms

*Superior Beef Genetics*

2188 Clay Avenue  
Bridgewater, IA 50837  
[www.nicholsfarms.biz](http://www.nicholsfarms.biz)

**Ross Havens**  
**Nichols Farms**  
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**Cody Frey – Creston Livestock Auction**  
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