



SANTA GERTRUDIS

USA

DECEMBER 2018 | VOLUME 21, NUMBER 12

MERRY CHRISTMAS



**FOCUS ON
BUSINESS AND FINANCE**

Santa Gertrudis



The Preferred American
Beef Breed

MASTERPIECE 101

**2017 NATIONAL
CHAMPION**

MASTERPIECE 101

(Reg. #20141438)

Masterpiece capped off one of the most dominant show careers in recent breed history. He had 13 consecutive Grand Championships and was named the 2017 National Champion Bull! We look for great things in his future. He is one of the best balanced EPD bulls, and now is your chance to use one of the most powerful bulls in the breed. His first calf crop looks *very impressive!*

Owned by Tinney Farms and Circle A Farm.

BW	WW	YW	Milk	T MAT	REA	Marb	FAT	HCW	Sh F
+0.57	+4.96	+3.59	-2.81	-0.33	-0.01	-0.01	+0.00	+3.14	-0.02
<i>Richmond</i>									
H Prg	Brd Bk	SC	\$G	Carc Idx					
-0.12	-0.09	+0.10	+4.50	4					

Sired by MASTERPIECE



QV REDEMPTION 60E1

Owned by Quail Valley Farms

Grand Champion Bull, 2018 State Fair of Texas
Grand Champion, Four States Fair
Grand Champion, Indiana State Fair



SUMMER SAGE

Owned by Tinney Farms

Grand Champion Female, 2018 Arkansas State Fair
Res. Grand Champ. Female, 2018 Indiana State Fair

SEMEN \$50/STRAW

for either bull,

10 straw minimum

MASTERPIECE— contact
Darren Richmond 423-364-9281
djrighmd@gmail.com

PISTOLERO — contact
Arlin Taylor (below) or
Richard Hood 979-224-6150
richard@amscattle.com

Pistolero

PISTOLERO 65/5

(Polled · Reg #20157885)

A Pistol son out of donor cow Harco 1247. Pistolero has some of the strongest numbers in the breed: WW 40.24, YW 70.41, HCW 49.85 and a Growth Index of \$65.38.

Co-owned with Quail Valley Farm.

BW	WW	YW	Milk	T MAT	REA	Marb	FAT	HCW	Sh F
+2.82	+40.24	+70.41	+5.14	+25.26	+0.72	-0.05	+0.04	+49.85	-0.02
H Prg	Brd Bk	SC	\$G	Carc Idx					
-0.13	+0.06	+1.11	+65.38	10					

Tinney Farms

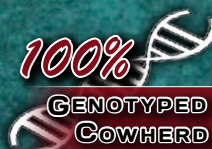
5251 Co. Rd. 601 · Hanceville, AL 35077

Manager: Arlin Taylor

256-507-3838

arlin.taylor@bhamfast.com

tinneyfarms.com



Follow us on Facebook!

Merry Christmas!



***Unwrap your herd's full potential with the addition of
Wendt Ranches' genetics this Christmas.***

This holiday season, we would like to thank all of our 2018 buyers.

We wish everyone the joy and warmth of having
your loved ones by your side and a very Happy 2019!



Wendt Ranches

5475 FM 457, Bay City, TX 77414

email: wendtranches@hotmail.com

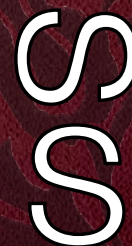
Gene Kubecka

979-240-5311

Daniel Kubecka

979-240-5312

SGBI Herd #621, established 1954



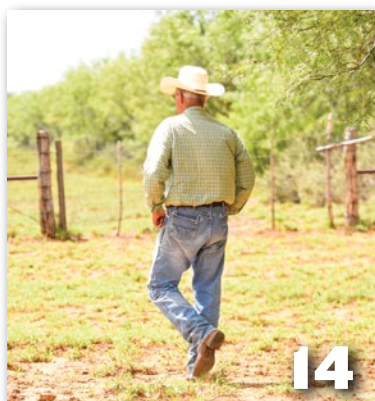
SANTA GERTRUDIS USA

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SANTA GERTRUDIS BREEDERS INTERNATIONAL

P.O. Box 1257, Kingsville, Texas 78364
 Phone: (361) 592-9357
 Fax: (361) 592-8572
 info@santagertrudis.com
 www.santagertrudis.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

John E. Ford
 Email: jford@santagertrudis.com

REGISTRATION & MEMBER SERVICES SPECIALIST

Diana L. Ruiz
 Email: diana@santagertrudis.com

MEMBER SERVICES

Daniella V. McClary-Munoz
 Email: daniella@santagertrudis.com

MEMBER SERVICES REPRESENTATIVE

Darren Richmond
 (423) 364-9281 | djrichmd@gmail.com

MAGAZINE STAFF

PUBLISHER

Blueprint Media
 P.O. Box 427, Timnath, CO 80547
 Email: info@blueprintma.com

MANAGING EDITOR

Jessie Topp-Becker
 (701) 307-0772 | jbecker@blueprintma.com

EDITOR

Lisa Bard | lbard@blueprintma.com
 (970) 498-9306

AD SALES | CATALOGS

Darren Richmond
 (423) 364-9281 | djrichmd@gmail.com

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Kathie Bedolli | kbedolli@blueprintma.com
 (970) 568-8219

MATERIALS COORDINATOR

Megan Sajbel

AD DESIGN

Holly Holland

ADMINISTRATION

Leslie McKibben

COPY EDITOR

Larisa Willrett



ON THE COVER

Santa Gertrudis females at Hefte Ranch, Hondo, Texas.
 Photo by Cate Doubet.

Providing Polled Power Genetics to the Santa Gertrudis Breed

Double C Farms

William W. Cameron, Jr. & Family

377 Double C Drive

Raeford, NC 28376

(910) 875-4963

redbull@embarqmail.com



RED DOC FARM

Dr. Roland & Elia Sanchez

703 S. Christopher Road (505) 864-7781 Office
Belen, NM 87002 (505) 864-2898 Residence



GRAY OAKS FARM

Dennis Jones, owner

905 Foxtrap Rd., Russellville, AL 35654

Home: (941) 735-9391

Austin Logan, Manager

(256) 335-8821



Embrace the Spirit of the Season!

**We are grateful for our many supporters and buyers
throughout the year and look forward to a wonderful 2019.**



*Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year from*

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Since 1973*



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Curtis Hudnall, President • (936) 334-4804

Larry Osborne, Secretary & Treasurer

(937) 604-4999

CREECH FARMS

12483 NC 39 • Zebulon, NC 27597

Tony (919) 427-4679

Brandon (919) 761-3894

Email: ccreech6@gmail.com

Herd No. 16769 • Herd No. 37879



Flying C Ranch

Lester & Ouida Cossey

2639 Gum Springs Rd., Searcy, AR 72143

(501) 207-2272





Ramblings from the Open Range

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

By John Ford

(361) 592-9357 | jford@santagertrudis.com

During my 30 years as an Extension employee, I attended, or frankly slept through, countless programs presented by ag economists on cowherd profitability. Economies of scale was a favorite term used with great frequency during these presentations. It's true, the beef industry is a volume-based business, and you don't need an advanced degree in economics to understand that larger operations have competitive advantages over smaller operations on several fronts. But, should herd size be the sole indicator of profitability? No, not at all, especially in the seedstock sector of the industry.

A seedstock operation's only purpose is to drive genetic change by developing bulls and females with traits that add value for all industry sectors. It is a challenging undertaking to breed cattle that can perform in differing environments under a wide variety of management practices, exhibit a balance of economically relevant traits and be capable of producing offspring that perform profitably in the pasture and the feedlot, while hitting consumer pleasing end-point targets.

A number of industry professionals (particularly those focused on economies of scale) are not very optimistic about the long-term prospects for small seedstock herds to operate in the black; however, I disagree. In my opinion, cattlemen managing purebred herds of 50 head or fewer are perfectly positioned to take advantage of a changing marketplace focused on quality and value. Regardless of herd size, offering animals that meet the needs of the commercial sector while providing seedstock-producing peers with the next generation of curve-bending genetics ensures financial success. Simply stated, seedstock profitability has nothing to do with herd size. Instead, it centers around the value that superior genetics add to an operation.

Every SGBI member has access to the tools that identify animals with

superior genetic merit. The association's genetic evaluation is a powerful tool for measuring economically relevant traits, enabling SGBI members to make breeding decisions that increase the proportion of genes having the desired effect on traits of economic importance. By utilizing association-generated expected progeny differences (EPDs), especially those verified by DNA, small-herd owners can move swiftly to identify the genetics demanded in a rapidly changing industry.

In my mind, it is much easier for smaller operations to change herd direction and incorporate new genetics into breeding programs than it is for larger operations. They are able to quickly provide curve-bending genetics to the market while demand is at its highest.

I am a firm believer that cattle must look the part, but the ultimate measure of value is offspring performance

and profitability. When our customers are making purchases, they are buying genetics, and the value of our breeding programs is measured strictly by our customers' calf crop performance. Therefore, understanding how to use the association's genetic evaluation and supporting tools is key to implementing a successful breeding and marketing strategy.

Earlier this year, under the direction of the SGBI Performance Committee, every member of the association received an updated Data Collection and Submission Resource Guide. The guide is designed to help members better understand the breed's tools and provide strategies for using the SGBI genetic evaluation in making profitable breeding decisions.

As I visit with SGBI members, I like to stress there is not a "good" or "bad" EPD. EPDs are to be used to select for more or less of a trait with the goal of finding the optimum trait(s) for an operation's environment and marketing scheme. The demand for optimum Santa Gertrudis genetics validated by the association's genetic evaluation continues to grow. Fads come and go; superior genetics are an industry mainstay.

Another year is ending and I have enjoyed every minute spent with SGBI members. I am blessed to work with cattlemen and cattlemen who are committed to improving our breed. I wish you a Christmas full of love, joy and cheer. 🍷

SGBI

Member News

LONGTIME SANTA GERTRUDIS BREEDER DAN WENDT, Wendt Ranch, Bay City, Texas, was recently awarded the 2018 Matagorda County Silver Spur Award. This award is the most prestigious honor given by the ranching and livestock industry in Matagorda County. Established in 2017, the Silver Spur Award is conferred upon iconic industry leaders whose unparalleled devotion to the land and livestock has earned them notable respect and admiration from their peers. Wendt was recognized for his years of hard work and dedication to the cattle industry and his community, as well as his commitment to his family. "[Dan's] impact didn't come from one big gesture or season, but rather a lifetime of routine and steady contribution to what he values," said Keith Meyer, Matagorda County Cattlemen's Association treasurer, while presenting the award. "Our community and cattle are better for it." 🍷

Dan Wendt, front, is surrounded by his family after receiving the Silver Spur Award. Family members pictured with Wendt, include, middle row, left to right, Gene Kubecka, Nancy Wendt Kubecka, Kinsley Kubecka, Kathy Wendt, Lauren Kubecka and Daniel Kubecka. Back row, left to right, Jonathan Sneed and Jenna Sneed.



SANTA GERTRUDIS DISTRICT VI BREEDERS



Colt 742

Welcome to Your New Kentucky Home!



We are excited to have purchased this fantastic Grandview Farms bull from Delmo Payne at the Alabama Connection Sale and are excited to see his influence in our herd.

We'd like to thank Gray Oaks Farm, Russellville, Ala., for their purchase of our consignment to the Kentucky National Sale.



***Merry Christmas & Best Wishes
To all our Santa Gertrudis friends and customers!***



**Cave City, Ky.
(270) 678-5302**

C BAR C RANCH



De Soto, MO 63020
Alan Clark
Bud & Kelly Clark
(314) 607-1076
bud@cbarcranch.net

WWW.CBARCRANCH.NET



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Aaron, Amy, Jack & Isaac Schroeder
18067 McCurdy Road
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Parker Farms



parkerfarms@scrtc.com

Charles, Deanna, Chip, June & Carsen Parker
5552 Jackson Hwy. • Cave City, KY 42127
(270) 678-5302 • (270) 670-6776

RUSTIC RAIL RANCH

PAUL & DEBBIE GAUTZ

9865 Blarney Lane • Carthage, MO 64836
dgautz53@yahoo.com
417-437-2452 • 417-438-8712



Shampain Ranch

Santa Gertrudis Cattle
Del & Ginny Thomas
Pleasant Hill, IL 62366
(217) 734-2283
ginny2@irtc.net

Herd #4434

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

By Jerome Urbanosky

(281) 797-5715 | jerome@ameritechsi.com



The new SGBI ranch signs are now available to order. You can find more information about ordering on page 18 and on the SGBI website, www.santagertrudis.com. Yancey Strait, chairman, and the SGBI Marketing and Promotion Committee did a terrific job overseeing the sign's design and coordinating the entire process.

The cost for the 4-foot by 4½-foot signs is \$700, plus shipping, and features a modern, polled Santa Gertrudis bull. Produced in Tennessee, they will be baked-on porcelain and will last forever. Each ranch will have two lines of custom print on the sign. The first line will be your ranch name (or your name), and the second line will be your location. The sign will be double sided so traffic can see your entrance from either direction.

Many of you are familiar with the old SGBI ranch signs. They still serve their function, but the new signs will be available to all SGBI members. They would be a great Christmas present.

Enhancing our breed's marketing is a key focus of my SGBI presidency, so completing our new Santa Gertrudis videos and making the new SGBI ranch signs available are priorities.

The fall sale season is underway, and demand for high-quality, data-driven and profit-proven Santa Gertrudis is high. Prices are at a record high. One thing is for sure, everyone wants the great ones.

Many breeders ask me why one heifer might sell for \$2,000 and another heifer might sell for \$7,500. The answer is it's all about quality, and if you don't know the difference, you have to get it figured out pretty quick.

Get involved in your local SGBI affiliate. Go to some SGBI shows. Go to some Santa Gertrudis sales. Be active and learn. We are in a great period for the Santa Gertrudis breed!

Until next time, spread the good news about Santa Gertrudis. 🐄

SGBI

Need to Know

In late September, the Santa Gertrudis Breeders International Board of Directors traveled to Logan, Utah, to review the progress of the Santa Gertrudis Foundation-supported project, *Utilizing the Santa Gertrudis Breed as a Model for Critically Evaluating Heterosis in Intermountain West Beef Systems*. The multi-year applied research project is being conducted under the supervision of Matt Garcia, Ph.D., Utah State University (USU) assistant professor and Extension beef cattle specialist, and is designed to educate Utah beef producers about the benefit of heterosis. Garcia reviewed project progress, shared preliminary project results and discussed program direction for the second year of the applied research effort.

Forty heavily influenced-Angus cows were AI bred to Santa Gertrudis bulls in August 2017 and calved at the Utah State Research Farm May 3-11, 2018. Birth weights were taken in the first 24 hours following calving. The average birth weight of the Santa Gertrudis-sired calves was 76 pounds and the average for the natural service Angus-sired calves was 80 pounds. Researchers collected preliminary calf weights at 135 days. The Santa Gertrudis-sired animals averaged 348 pounds and the Angus-sired calves averaged 318 pounds.

During year two of the study, 250 head of the USU Angus-based cowherd will be bred to Santa Gertrudis bulls. Data points will be collected for all calves, with calves being finished onsite at USU before being shipped to a local commercial

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13 ►

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SGBI BOARD OF DIRECTORS BY REGION

WESTERN REGION

Tylor Braden (Texas)
King Ranch
(361) 219-0434 | TBraden@king-ranch.com
Kathryn Hefte (Texas)
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(210) 414-2493 | hefteranch@gmail.com
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Wendt Ranches
(979) 240-5311 | wendtranches@hotmail.com
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Urbanosky Ranch
(281) 797-5715 | jerome@ameritechsi.com
Nancy Wunderlich (Texas)
Wunderlich Farms
(979) 277-2838 | n.wunderlich@hotmail.com

EASTERN REGION

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Circle A Farm
931-682-2527 | elaine@mtbj.net
Bud Clark (Mo.)
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(314) 607-1076 | bud@cbarcranch.net
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(601) 384-6719 | rcowart@cottonbranch.com
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(270) 670-6285 | parkerfarms@scrtc.com
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(918) 470-5371 | rdsilva06@sbcglobal.net

AT-LARGE DIRECTORS

District 1 – Alicia Sanchez (N.M.)
Red Doc Farm
(505) 463-1993 | alicia@justiceins.com
District 2 – Debbie Townsend (Texas)
Townsend Cattle Company
(979) 541-4989 | townsendcattle81@gmail.com
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777 Farms
(870) 904-3070 | jd@gregbennett.com
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(256) 507-3838 | arlin.taylor@bmamfast.com
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Creech Farms
(919) 427-4679 | creechfarms6@gmail.com
District 6 – Todd Osborne (Mo.)
Osborne Livestock Co.
(859) 991-2438 | peppydoc1@aol.com

SANTA GERTRUDIS SMALL BREEDERS GROUP



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(409) 594-2203
calebdenmon15@gmail.com

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817-994-6596 • paulburrough@prodigy.net

Painted Ass Ranch LLC

Robert Rhodes & Kay (Kady) Burkman

560 Pioneer Rd, Seguin, Texas
(210) 445-9536

kadytexas@yahoo.com

www.paintedassranch.com



PAYNE RANCH

Ben & Sherry Payne
951 Mulberry Lane
Dayton, TX 77535
(936) 258-5868 | spayne35@att.net

RED DAWN FARMS

Reddawnfarmsal@gmail.com

Kenneth J. & Dawn Caldbeck
Gallant, Alabama

Kenneth (205) 482-4633

Dawn (205) 529-3966



RED DAWN FARMS

A Proud Breeder of Registered Santa Gertrudis Genetics



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ROCKIN' KV RANCH

Kevin & Venus Felkins

New Caney, Texas 77357

(832) 443-6349

(832) 567-8391

Rocking.KV.Ranch@gmail.com



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Heifers for
Sale

Scott Threet (972) 489-6887

Colby Threet (214) 949-7084

801 Lakeway

Ennis, TX 75119

Home of Cinderella & Prince Charmin

TRIPLE P RANCH

Mike, Kim or Tate Peppercorn

11090 FM 356 • Trinity, Texas 75862

(713) 703-8937 • (281) 825-8459

(936) 222-1164

kim.peppercorn@yahoo.com



Jake and Haley Streck

(580) 542-5253

P.O. Box 246

Pond Creek, Okla. 73766

jstreck1315@gmail.com



VZ Cattle

Scott & Tracy Van Zile
New Boston, Texas 75570

(903) 277-3601 or

(903) 908-0606

vzcattle@gmail.com



WILLIAMS FARM

Kenny & Jackie Williams

Kentwood, LA 70444

(985) 229-0012 • (225) 276-6970 cell

williamskh1953@gmail.com

Herd 38981



SANTA GERTRUDIS *Calendar*

JANUARY 2019

- 19** Premier Cowtown Elite Sale, Fort Worth, Texas
20 Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo Santa Gertrudis Show (SGBI Point Show), Fort Worth, Texas
30-Feb. 1 Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show, New Orleans, La.

FEBRUARY

- 8** Banners & Buckles Prospect Sale, Jackson, Miss.
9 2019 National Santa Gertrudis Show, Jackson, Miss.

MARCH

- 1** Mid-Coast International Super Sale, Houston, Texas
2 International Santa Gertrudis Show, Houston, Texas
23 Santa Gertrudis Bluebonnet Class Sale, Hallettsville, Texas

APRIL

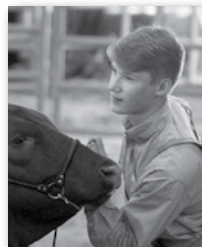
- 11-14** SGBI 68th Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Texas

OCTOBER

- 26** 2nd Annual Strait-Hefte Tried & True Production Sale, Carrizo Springs, Texas

SANTA GERTRUDIS *Juniors*

By JD Chism, District 3 Director



Greetings from the Magnolia State! I am JD Chism, your District 3 National Junior Santa Gertrudis Association (NJSGA) director. The junior Board has had an extremely busy summer and fall. We had our junior retreat in Amarillo, Texas, followed by a very productive meeting at the State Fair of Texas. I also had the pleasure of exhibiting and visiting the District 6 show and sale in Richmond, Ind. It was so much fun, and everyone was so hospitable.

We have been busy, as well, with cattle shows across my home state. Our state fair had one of our largest junior Santa Gertrudis shows in several years. I am very proud that we are experiencing a lot of growth in my home state in respect to junior exhibitors, and purebred and commercial Santa Gertrudis cattle.

As I was looking through the numerous fall sale catalogs, I was pleased to see the progress our breeders have made in their cattle, both phenotypically and genetically. In the long run, this will add to the bottom line for us all. The buyers I have seen at sales are an even mixture of returning and new buyers. Breeders from all breeds are noticing what our "Gerts" have to offer their commercial and crossbred operations.

A lot of this breed is the love of the hobby, but in the end, it always comes down to business and finance. Good sales and great promotions are huge assets to the business side in the industry we love. In return, they continue to push the finances of red cattle into the black.

I am very excited that the National Show is returning to my state. Our fairgrounds works hard with our breeders to make it easy to check in and unload, as well as ensure a smooth departure. We are also proud to host the Banners and Buckles Haltered Sale in conjunction with our show. I hope to meet as many of you as I can and reconnect with everyone who will be in attendance. See y'all there! 🐾

REGISTRATIONS, STAR 5 RECORDINGS AND TRANSFERS BY DISTRICT

OCTOBER 2018

ACTIVE MEMBERS

District	Purebred Reg.	STAR 5 Reg.	Performance Only	Purebred & STAR 5 Trans.
1	12	0	0	14
2	282	31	31	96
3	26	3	52	4
4	38	1	2	68
5	6	1	0	1
6	74	3	0	31

JUNIOR MEMBERS

District	Purebred Reg.	STAR 5 Reg.	Performance Only	Purebred & STAR 5 Trans.
1	50	13	0	45
2	8	3	0	9
3	3	3	0	1
4	2	0	0	0
5	2	2	0	3

FOR SGBI REGISTRATIONS CONTACT: Diana Ruiz

P. O. Box 1257, Kingsville, Texas 78364 | diana@santagertrudis.com

Phone: (361) 592-9357 • Fax: (361) 592-8572

SANTA GERTRUDIS WELCOMES

New Members

Active Members

College Kid Poor Cattle Co.,
 Logan Streadl, Orange Grove, Texas
 Rocking K Ranch, Robert Kirkpatrick,
 Athens, Texas

Junior Members

Logan Morman, Saint Jo, Texas
 Sydney Loos, Sugarland, Texas
 Brandon Wilkes, Pittsburg, Texas
 Layne Bode, Dayton, Texas
 Madison Liska, Corpus Christi, Texas
 Matteson Kapa, Corpus Christi, Texas
 Rylie Grace Philipello, Bryan, Texas
 Ricky Reese Gardner, Lindale, Texas
 Cheyenne Gary, Bell City, La.



Banners & Buckles

PROSPECT SALE

HEIFERS • BULLS • STAR 5 FEMALES

February 8, 2019
Friday, 6:00 p.m.

In conjunction with the 2019 National Santa Gertrudis Show
at the Dixie National Livestock Show

Jackson, MS

All consignments will meet 2019 NJSGS ownership deadlines.

Selling 25 halter broke lots.

These Champions Were Sold In This Sale!

Consignors

Circle A Farm, TN

5 Bar E Farm, FL

777 Farm, AR

B Square Ranch, TX

Cotton Branch, MS

Flying C Ranch, AR

Grandview Farm, AL

Heath Farm, KY

Crosswinds Ranch, TX

Myers Cattle & Land Co., TX

Pitchford Cattle Co., TX

Quail Valley Farm, AL

Rolling Oaks Ranch, MO

San Jose Cattle Co., TX

Stricko Ranch, KY

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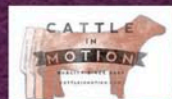


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SANTA GERTRUDIS *Production*

PRE-WINTER, WINTER CHECKLIST

By Randy L. Stanko, Ph.D., Texas A&M University-Kingsville



Depending on where you live, December could be considered late fall or mid-winter. Regardless, December is a good time to make and complete a checklist for spring-time cow activities. According to my weatherman, this winter is supposed to be colder and wetter than normal. That means I better check on a few things: 1) current hay inventory; 2) amount of stockpiled forage I have; 3) conditions of the road(s) and entrance(s) to my pasture(s); and 4) the status and condition of hay rings. Cows will need roughage this winter for nutrition and to generate heat on those cold, dreary and rainy February days. For every degree below 55° F, a cow's energy requirement will increase by 10 percent.

I ran across an online hay calculator from the University of Wisconsin Extension that was adapted from the University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service (<https://fyi.uwex.edu/wbic/files/2010/11/Estimating-hay-needs.xls>). There are other, similar programs available, but this particular program is very user friendly. A basic and simple recommendation to remember is that one 1,350-pound cow will eat one 1,000-pound round bale per month if that is all she has to eat (includes wasted hay).

December is a good month to critically evaluate the entire cow herd. We all should be finished with fall calving and the weaning of spring calves. We have already palpated and culled any open, spring-calving cows. Now is the best time to evaluate the older, fall-calving cows. *Is she fit enough to feed through the winter? Is she able to rebreed this winter?*

Although cows' longevity can vary depending on breed type and breed composition, once she has passed her 10th birthday, the probability of her successfully rebreeding decreases and will decrease even more after her 12th birthday. Check thinner cows for broken mouths, and all cows for eye problems and any residual fly tags. If ticks, lice or lingering flies are present, you may need to treat.

After you have made any culling decisions on the fall-calving cows, critically evaluate the body condition scores (BCS) of *all* keeper cows and heifers. By December, most of the bred heifers and cows should be finishing the second and entering the third trimester of pregnancy. If possible, I would recommend pasturing the BCS 3s and 4s together in the better pastures and provide supplemental nutrition if needed to

increase one body condition score. Any cow or heifer that is in a BCS 5 or better in December will most likely winter well on dry grass or hay with one-half to one pound of supplemental protein per day, on average.

Remember, if plenty of roughage (fiber, energy) is available, heifers and cows will only need supplemental protein, which will improve forage intake and digestibility. However, if roughage is limited, you will need to supplement both protein and energy (i.e. corn) to maintain body condition during the winter.

Next on the checklist is the status of calving supplies for the spring. Make sure you have all of your equipment and make sure it is clean and in one location. Check your supplies of frozen colostrum, bedding materials and old bath towels. If it turns out to be cold and wet this winter, you will need plenty of all three. Order any new ear tags needed for spring calves or females that have lost tags.

Last on the checklist is to order or purchase vaccine for the spring-calving cows and plan to vaccinate for leptospirosis and vibriosis (Campylobacteriosis) 20-60 days prior to rebreeding. Also, now would be a good time to inject all cattle with vitamin A or A-D-E if you have gotten dry, did not plant winter annuals or have had frost. Fill mineral and salt feeders. December is such a great month; Thanksgiving is still in our memory, Christmas is coming and you have all kinds of good help because the kids are on a break from school. Let's put them to work helping with our checklist. It's family time well spent. 🍂

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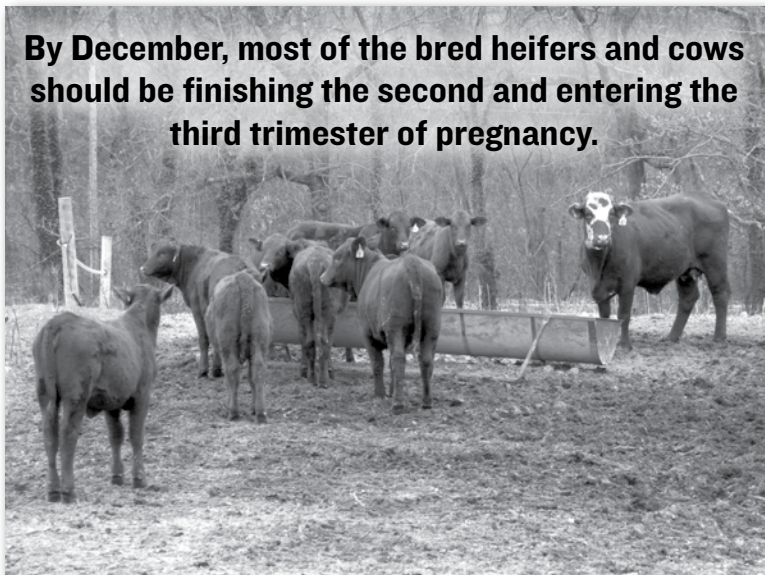


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SANTA GERTRUDIS SALE *Reports*

GREAT SANTA GERTRUDIS SALE

OCT. 13, 2018 | DALLAS, TEXAS

SALE AVERAGES

17	Open Heifers	\$3,465
7	Bulls	\$2,385
3	STAR 5 Heifers	\$2,550

The Great Santa Gertrudis Sale was held at the State Fair of Texas. The sale manager was Darrell Pitchford. The high-selling female was consigned by Circle A Farm, Williamsport, Tenn., and was sold to Steve Sanders,

Edmond, Okla., for \$6,900. The high-selling bull was consigned by Rockin 3T Ranch, Ennis, Texas, and was sold to Bill and Jean Miller, Palacios, Texas, for \$4,000. 🐾



STRAIT-HEFTE TRIED AND TRUE PRODUCTION SALE

OCT. 20, 2018 | CARRIZO SPRINGS, TEXAS

SALE AVERAGES

14	Bulls	\$6,839	7	Bred Heifers	\$9,357
3	Semen Lots	\$16,333	5	Open Heifers	\$11,500
15	3N1 Splits	\$15,450	1	Flush Lot	\$6,500
1	Bred Cow	\$10,000			

The Strait-Hefte Tried and True Production Sale took place Oct. 20, 2018, in Carrizo Springs, Texas. The sale manager was American Marketing Services and the auctioneer was Leo Casas. The high-selling bulls were Hefte Ranch D59, Lot 36, which was sold to Briggs Ranches, Victoria, Texas, and SR 42/7, Lot 37, which was sold to B Square Ranch, Timpson, Texas. The high-selling semen lots were KR 191/13, Lot 31A, which was sold to Vesper Ranch, Cotulla, Texas, and KR 191/13, Lot 31B/C, which was sold to Townsend Cattle Company, Louise, Texas, and Wiley Ranch, Deville, La. The high-selling 3N1 split lots were SR 18/18, Lot 1A, which was sold to Buena Vida Ranch/Kalli Kimble, Kingsbury, Texas; SR T19, Lot 1, which was sold to Townsend Cattle Company; SR 11/18, Lot 6A, which was sold to Schuster Farms, San Juan, Texas; and SR 4/5, Lot 6, which was sold to Hefte Ranch, Hondo, Texas. The high-selling bred cow was Hefte Ranch D19, Lot 17, which was sold to Grandview Farms, Hamilton, Ala. The high-selling bred heifers were SR 116/6, Lot 23, which was sold to Harris Riverbend Farm, Cleburne, Texas, and Quail Valley Farm, Oneonta, Ala., and SR 139/6, Lot 20, which was sold to Grandview Farms. The high-selling open heifers were SR

90/7, Lot 27, which was sold to Vesper Ranch, and SR T45, Lot 24B, which was sold to Harris Riverbend Farm, Quail Valley Farm and Schuster Farms. The high-selling flush was Lot 13, which was sold to Hillary Trant, Iola, Texas. 🐾

MOUNTAIN LAUREL CLASSIC SALE

NOV. 3, 2018 | CALHOUN, GA.

SALE AVERAGES

27	Registered Lots	\$1,757
13	Crossbred Lots	\$1,405

The Mountain Laurel Classic Sale was sponsored by the Georgia Santa Gertrudis Association. The sale manager was Darren Richmond, and the auctioneer was Carroll Cannon. The high-selling pair was consigned by Nolanda Richards, Walland, Tenn., and was sold to 4S Farm and Jones-Nixon Farm, Geraldine, Ala., for \$3,000. The high-selling bred heifer was consigned by MC Ranch, Alpharetta, Ga., and was sold to Hiss Family Farm, Columbia City, Ind., for \$2,800. The high-selling open heifer was consigned by Ronald Wood, Benson, N.C., and was sold to Jacklett Farms, Alpharetta, Ga., for \$2,500. The high-selling STAR 5 pair was consigned by Circle A Farm, Williamsport, Tenn., and was sold to Jolly Farms, Byrdstown, Tenn., for \$3,150. 🐾



NEED TO KNOW CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

processing facility for carcass measurements (JBS, Millers). The information will be compared to calves sired by Angus clean-up bulls.

"The preliminary results clearly indicate that utilizing Santa Gertrudis genetics in a crossbreeding program will result in improved fertility, survivability and growth rates," SGBI Executive Director John Ford says. "I appreciate Utah State animal science faculty for conducting this applied research project that validates the benefits of heterosis and the value of Santa Gertrudis genetics. I want to thank SGBI members

who have generously supported the Santa Gertrudis Foundation, allowing this type of work to take place. It is essential that SGBI partners with universities and other creditable industry members, validating our breed's performance."

To learn more about the Santa Gertrudis Foundation research projects or to support research efforts, contact John Ford at (361) 592-9357. 🐾



Matt Garcia, Ph.D.

So You Want to be a **SEEDSTOCK PRODUCER?**

By Hannah Johlman, Freelance Writer
Photos by Cate Doubet

Buying a ranch is a big decision that requires a lot of thought and preparation, not to mention passion for an industry that can be less than forgiving at times. But for young people who either grew up in the cattle business and don't have the option to return to a family ranch or who want to become first-generation cattlemen, "to buy or not to buy" is a decision they must face if they truly want to be involved in the industry. Sometimes, the safe answer is no, but sometimes, the answer is yes.

When Trey Wasserburger was 27 years old, he and his wife, Dayna, had the opportunity to purchase a seedstock operation near North Platte, Neb. It wasn't an easy decision. The young couple considered the offer for 60 days, even telling Bill Rishel they couldn't buy his ranch on two occasions, but the third time was the charm, and they decided to take the plunge.

The safest and most recommended route for young producers is to start small and build over time. Rishel Angus, now TD Angus at Rishel Ranch, exemplifies both ends of the spectrum – a rancher who started small and worked his way to the top, and a young couple who took a huge risk buying a successful business with the help of a banker.

Rishel grew up on a diversified farm in Pennsylvania, knowing someday he would own and breed black cattle. As a young man, he became involved in livestock judging and attended college for animal husbandry. He managed a purebred cattle operation in New York, where he put together a small herd of 13 quality animals before moving to Nebraska in 1975 with his wife and daughters.

For years, they leased pasture and slowly built up the herd. Over time, they were able to purchase 20 acres, then purchase more, putting the ranch together piece by piece. Rishel was one of the first breeders to use carcass data as a selection criteria in his seedstock herd.

Rishel's three daughters grew up on the ranch, but life took them in different directions away from livestock. The rancher told himself that he would never let his operation or herd deteriorate. Although the easiest thing would have been to hold a dispersal sale, Rishel couldn't let more than 40 years of hard work go to the wind. Then, a mutual acquaintance

told him of a young couple who may be interested in purchasing the ranch.

When Rishel told Wasserburger the ranch's appraisal value and what he and his wife were hoping to get for it, Wasserburger says it was a big case of sticker shock at first. Throughout the negotiations, the younger couple was able to look at the ranch's financial records and were pleased with what they saw.

"They hadn't lost money one time through the years – ups, downs, highs, lows. Some years they didn't make any but they still paid the note," Wasserburger says. "I said to Dayna, 'I can do that.'"

The two parties entered negotiations, and when the contracts were signed, the retiring cattleman made a promise to his successor that he would answer questions and help in any way possible, as long as it was needed.

"The reward we see for them buying this operation is enough reward for me," Rishel says. "I don't need to get paid when I help, I get enough joy and satisfaction out of seeing them be successful. They are doing an extraordinary job of taking their experience from the commercial cow-calf and feedlot industries and adapting over into the knowledge and learning curve of the purebred thing."

Unfortunately, it's not always this easy. The next generation isn't always knocking down the door of an older rancher who may be considering selling. It takes a special person to accept the risk of such a large business loan.

Tom Field, Ph.D., director of the Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program at University of Nebraska-Lincoln,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 »

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SO YOU WANT TO BE A SEEDSTOCK PRODUCER? CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

says that, as fun as it would be to buy 400 registered cows and get rolling, it requires a huge risk. Field's best advice to young producers is to start small, like what Rishel did when he started building his herd.

"Starting small and using available technology to speed up your turn around, that helps you," Field says. "Embryo transfer, artificial insemination, market selection, any technology helps you de-risk your business."

The key to becoming a successful seedstock breeder, according to Field, will mostly depend on how well he or she understands the market, is comfortable with data, is fascinated by genetics and if he or she is patient. There are no shortcuts in turning over generations of cattle.

When someone approaches Field with a business idea, he first encourages them to think about if they have the staying power, energy and enthusiasm to become an entrepreneur.

"It's risky stuff; it's challenging, and it takes time and effort, and there's huge risk involved," Field says. "There's plenty of downsides."

Early on in a business, it's exciting when things start happening, but there is always a moment that slows progress and things get tough. When that happens, Field wants to make sure the business owner has the tools to carry on before too much time or money is invested.

"The second thing you look at is the market," he says. "The most important thing to do is stop and say, 'Okay, who is my customer?'"

In the seedstock industry, it can be difficult to break into a market when, most often, customers are already loyally devoted to a bull supplier. Being creative when looking for market penetration, opportunities and unmet needs can go a long way.

"It's paying attention after the sale. It's making good if there's a problem," Field says. "I think it's also really important for people to understand this is a really tough business. In a perfect world, if I were to go start a seedstock entity from the ground up today, I would leverage seedstock cattle as a secondary income source to a set of commercial cows, and I would be proving out my own genetics that I was trying to provide others in my own set of commercial cows."

Before someone spends a lot of time and money buying cows or bulls, Field suggests first showing up and having conversations to get to know prospective customers. A person can't break into a market by running other people's products down; however, they can break into a market by

providing a service and being a more visible, accessible source of information. They can get to know commercial producers, ascertaining their needs and understanding what their operations are about.

"It is extremely important in the purebred industry that you understand the marketplace. You had better understand the feedlot industry, you had better understand the packing industry and, above all, understand that none of these people are your enemy," Rishel says. "Every segment down through this until this product gets to the consumer is your customer. If you're not trying to put together a genetic combination that adds value to every one of those segments, including giving that consumer a really powerful and nutritious eating experience, then you had better reassess what you're doing. This is essential to any young person getting into this business."

Not to be discouraging, Field warns that the average seedstock herd in the United States lasts about seven years, or one and a half generations. There are no shortcuts to being sustainable in the cattle business.

"Anybody who has ever tried to do it with shortcuts eventually loses their customer base because they give them what they don't want," Field says.

After the market and risks have been thoroughly considered, the next step involves capital, which nearly everyone making their first steps into the cattle business will have to get from the bank. According to California Cattlemen's Association President David Daley, Ph.D., a person must have a sound financial management plan in terms of cash flow and a budget.

The problem Daley sees most producers face is that they must have some amount of equity before a bank will consider a loan. Some banks have less restrictive, lower interest rate programs for young producers (for example, the Farm Service Agency). Daley says those can be a challenge because of the amount of paperwork involved.

"For most young producers, that's going to be their first option to work through a program like that unless they already have some equity or partnership opportunities," Daley says.

No matter who the loan is through, Daley says, at a minimum, a bank will want to see a financial statement, budget and cash flow statement.

With a simple cattle purchase, for example, the budget should include the purchase cost, as well as every cost for the foreseeable future, including potential costs – feed, pasture, veterinary bills, transportation, vaccines, and wear and tear on vehicles.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 »

The key to becoming a successful seedstock breeder, according to Field, will mostly depend on how well he or she understands the market, is comfortable with data, is fascinated by genetics and if he or she is patient. There are no shortcuts in turning over generations of cattle.



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SO YOU WANT TO BE A SEEDSTOCK PRODUCER?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

"You have to be honest that these are your true costs, then best estimate your income," Daley says.

Everything should be estimated on an average, not based on drought or good grass years. The financial statement will reflect the applicant's value, assets and debts, and the cash flow statement will show the inflow and outflow of cash over a given time.



"[Banks] want to see people who have a good management plan and someone who can document that they have some experience; maybe they worked for someone or grew up in the business," Daley says.

It's not bad to shop around for a good banker either. Finding a banker who understands and is willing to make agricultural, particularly livestock loans, is a must. Depending on what part of the country someone is in, there might not be many banks to choose from.

"Look for a relationship with a bank who has worked historically with the livestock or farming sector and has a track record," Daley says. "You can find out by going to cattlemen's meetings or asking other cattlemen what bank they use." ▶

Traits That Make a GOOD SEEDSTOCK PRODUCER

Tom Field shares insight on traits that make a good seedstock producer.

✓ **Do you see problems and want to change them?**

"If there is something they see as a problem and they say they really just aren't going to live with that and have an 'I'm going to change it' attitude. Sometimes it's big things, sometimes it's little things."

✓ **Are you curious by nature?**

"They're curious and willing to ask questions and are more interested in the questions than the answer. Anyone who starts with a solution is probably not a really great entrepreneur. A curious person connects the dots that other people miss."

✓ **Are you willing to take a risk?**

"This is not a risk-free business."

✓ **Are you good at executing?**

"They can take an imperfect plan and execute it really well. They can out-execute their competitors because they are focused, nimble, agile and willing to solve problems on the fly."

✓ **Do you have core values that drive and motivate you?**

"Oftentimes it is not money; it's a desire for autonomy, a desire to be purposeful, a desire to become very, very good at something." 🐾

The first time a young borrower approaches a bank, Daley suggests they go in looking for feedback on their plan. Rather than demanding to have \$200,000 the next day, approach the bank with your idea and ask if it is feasible, or how the plan could be adjusted.

"Relationships with bankers are just like doctors, dentists or accountants, you need to find someone who fits your style and you can work with," Daley says.

When Wasserburger first approached his bank with the idea of buying Rishel Angus, he had a history of owning cattle and paying the bank back.

Regardless of the route young producers choose to go – starting small or jumping in feet first – Rishel and Field agree that the best way to do it is with integrity.

"There is no shortcut to getting things done by not having the utmost integrity," Rishel says. "As big as our beef industry is, when it comes to relationships, it's really small."

It can take a lifetime to build a reputation and business, but that can all go away in the blink of an eye.

"I think there's an opportunity to break into markets because you do business the right way," Field says. "How you do business can have a big impact. If you look at any of the young seedstock producers who have done it well and relatively quickly, they did business the right way." 🐾

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777 Gambler, shown by 777 Farms and Circle A Farm, Williamsport, Tenn.



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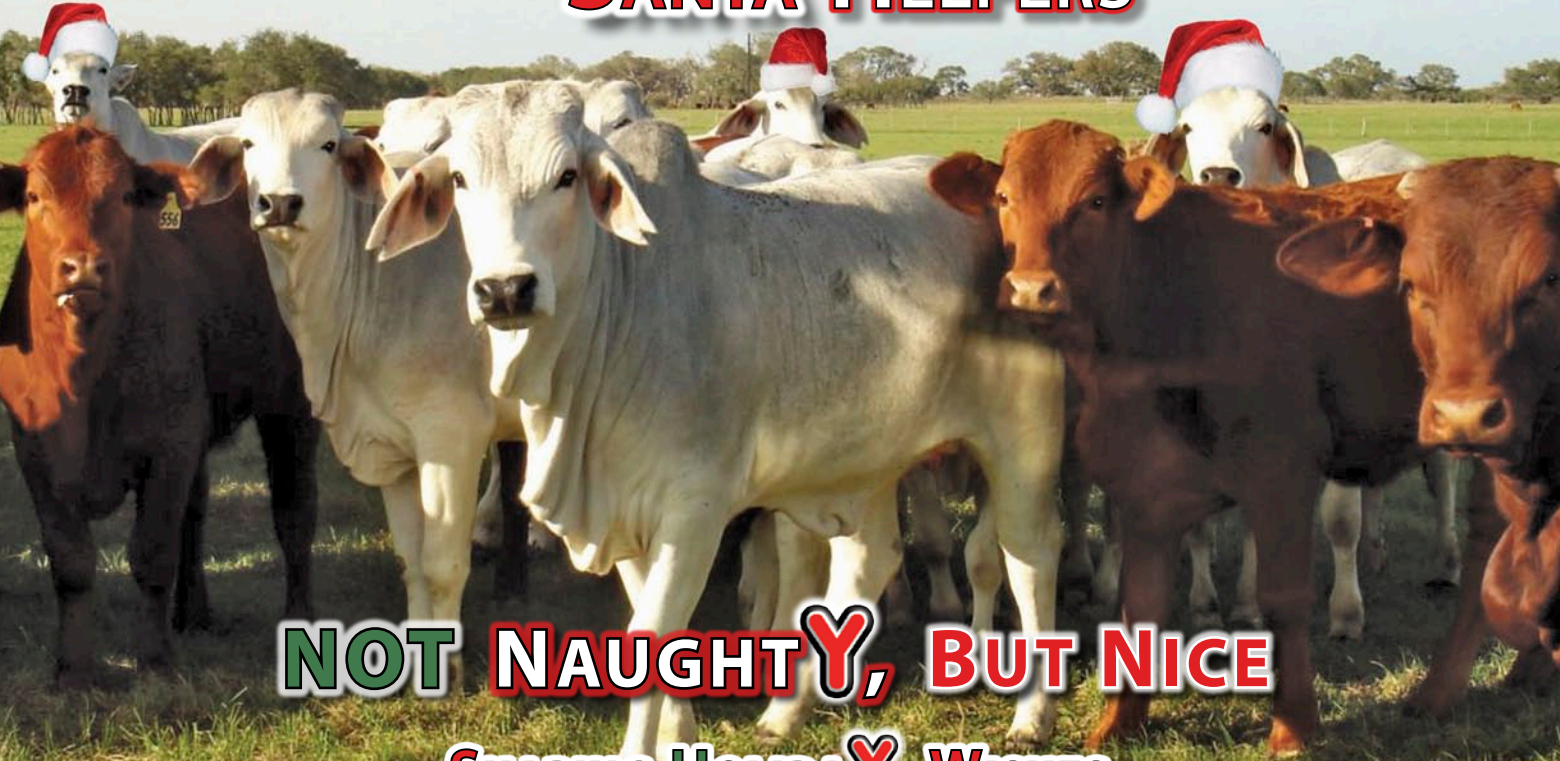
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