



# Deep Roots

By: Ddee Haynes

In the red soil and rolling plains just southwest of Leedey, Oklahoma you will find the Quartermaster Creek Ranch, home to Mike and Annie Switzer. Just like the sagebrush, roots run deep for this couple. Both Mike and Annie grew up less than 10 miles from the ranch they purchased in 1996. Mike and Annie have two daughters. Their oldest Emily lives in Los Angeles, CA, and is a certified practicing trauma surgeon. Elana, the youngest, is a traveling registered nurse and currently resides in Washington DC, along with her data analyst husband Mike Bray.

After graduating high school Mike and Annie attended Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford, OK obtaining degrees in business management. In 1987 Mike and Annie married and began their marriage living on Mike's grandfather's land running a stocker operation and a few commercial cows. A few short years later the Switzer's slowly began their transition from stockers to a commercial cow/calf operation, purchasing a string of 175 heifers from the Harrel ranch, also located in Leedey, OK.

In 1998, Mike and Annie traveled to Wibaux, MT, home to the Lunds B-Bar Angus, a third-generation registered

seed stock operation, with the sole intention of purchasing a show heifer for their oldest daughter. Little did the couple know that this trip would soon change their ranching operation from a commercial herd to one of the largest angus seed stock and commercial operations in Oklahoma.

Mike first learned of the Lunds B-Bar from a good friend and mentor, Barton Wherritt. Barton a stocker buyer showed Mike firsthand through his actions the importance of honesty and integrity and continually shared his knowledge of the cattle industry. Barton told Mike the Lunds ranch was one of the finest ranches he had ever been on and if Mike was looking for cattle, or in this instance, a show heifer with great genetics the Lunds B-Bar, was where he needed to go.

The trip was a success! The heifer Mike and Annie purchased for \$1,000 proved herself by winning everywhere she was shown. One judge while

discussing the ring of cattle made the remark that even Ray Charles could have picked that heifer out as a winner. For the next two falls, the Switzer's would travel to Wibaux, MT to purchase registered bred heifers. The first fall they brought home 40, and the next year 30. When it was all said and done the Quartermaster Creek ranch was home to 71 registered purebred seed-stock angus.

In 2004, a decision to fully commit to an AI program was made, thus beginning the history of the Quartermaster Creek Registered Angus seedstock ranch. The AI protocol is as follows; each cow/heifer is AI'd once, later tested for pregnancy and if open AI'd a second time then turned out with the pas-



ture bulls. Once a calf hits the ground a DNA test is taken to determine if the calf is from an AI sire or a pasture bull. All AI's calves will be registered and sold as seedstock. The calves from the pasture bulls are registered but sold as commercial.

The Switzer's pride themselves on raising cattle that will work for most ranches. Once the calves are weighed and weaned, they are turned out on wheat, and back on grass until early fall.

120 days prior to their annual bull and female sale in February, the cattle are shipped to a grow yard in Hereford, TX and fed a grow ration. Thirty days prior to the sale, the bulls are shipped back to the ranch. At the ranch they receive dry hay and cattle cubes up until

to the day they are sold as two-year old bulls ready to work.

Prior to their annual sale, Mike stated that he is always nervous and doubtful not knowing if the buyers will come. When the sale is over, he is always humbled by the number of repeat and new buyers that attend. Mike said he once heard the quote, "the best fertilizer for any business is the owners' footsteps." This simple quote reminds him daily that in order to be successful he needs to continue to be hands on and never stop working to improve his operation.

Mike and Annie take pride in their land, cattle and their roots. It is because of these roots or where they came from, families with strong work ethics, integrity, honesty and the love of the land,

that they feel they owe their success. Annie said her biggest joy is seeing the new babies hit the ground and all the previous year's hard work coming to life. While Mike, finds joy in seeing the two-year-old heifers calving knowing that this process actually started three years back.

As with any operation, the Switzer's face the day-today struggles all ranches face, weather conditions, income vs. input, lack of help, etc. However, at the end of the day the couple feels blessed to be able to live the lifestyle they love. 

