

Profitable Producers

Angus producers with side hustles share more on their businesses off the ranch.

by Megan Clark, editorial intern

Hustle and bustle. Grit and determination. Balancing act. These two-word combinations describe the lives of three producers who share similar passions beyond raising black-hided cattle. Whether it's the extra cash flow or following a passion project, these entrepreneurial spirits have found success in managing their own businesses off the ranch while maintaining a strong influence in the cattle industry and Angus family.

Built on a hobby

Bodey Langford, owner of Langford Cattle Company, manages most of his registered Angus in south Texas. But a large piece of property he owns in west Texas isn't as friendly to raising his seedstock herd.

"It's so wild and rugged and brushy," he says.

While the land for raising cattle is less than ideal, Langford has found a way to make the ground in Lockhart profitable while maintaining its history on the ranch — a hunting operation.

The fourth-generation cattleman says the operation has been in business since 1990 and sprouted from a hobby of his.

"Our family and friends have always enjoyed hunting together, and we had a management program going on, a deer herd out there," he says. "We realized to do it properly, my family and close friends were not able to harvest enough deer to keep the numbers in check and keep the herd healthy."

With interest from individuals who were more than willing to pay to hunt on the ranch land, Tres Coyotes Ranch was born.

White-tailed deer, blue quail, black buck antelope and Rio Grande turkey star in the game living on the ranch, but there is another creature who takes the cake for many hunters.

"There's an invasive species that has moved into our part of the country called Axis deer, and it's imported from Pakistan," Langford explains, noting they were a welcomed surprise when they appeared on the ranch because of their hardy appetite and high-quality meat. "It's kind of the Angus of the deer world from an eating standpoint."

With the ranch's bow-hunting-only, 100% archery stipulation and species with uniqueness, Tres Coyotes Ranch has gained popularity from more than just hunters.

"I've actually sold a good many bulls to hunting customers over the years and some cows as well," Langford says. "My cattle clientele seem to also be very much into the outdoors, into the hunting aspect of things, too. It's fun to overlap that."

Balancing the business while maintaining his Angus herd can be challenging, but with support from others, it's feasible. Young agricultural students at a high school near Tres Coyotes help tend to the deer and maintain the landscape during busy seasons like calving, when Langford is needed elsewhere.

"I've got a couple of young men



here that help me at my home ranch, and they've both been with me quite a while," he says. "I'm starting to slow things down a little bit, so I'm very fortunate to have some good young help that is eager to pitch in."

The producer explains hunting operations are gaining popularity in the Lone Star State because of their dual-purpose nature.

"There seems to be an unlimited demand for good hunting places, and people from all over the country come to Texas every year and want to participate in that," Langford says. "I know a lot of people that are doing the same thing by overlapping hunting and ranching while using the same property. Everybody has their own unique twist about how they go about things."

Langford Cattle Company's operator encourages others, specifically Texas cattlemen with interests in the hunting arena to give the viable option of leasing a go. While his side hustle is hard work, Langford reaps the benefits while still practicing ranch techniques that have been in the family for generations.

The bejeweled junior

Twenty-year-old Jacee Sumpter is an entrepreneur from Branson, Colo. She's a fifth-generation breeder who grew up on her family's cow-calf operation.

"I joined the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) in 2020," she says. "My first junior nationals was actually in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and we've been to every single one after that."

Despite the heat and a global pandemic, the junior says she continued to get involved in the breed by joining the Colorado Junior Angus Association, serving as president the past two years, and

attending conferences hosted by the NJAA like Raising the Bar.

Though her junior membership will soon be coming to an end, Sumpter's involvement outside of the breed will keep her busy.

Sumpter graduated with an associate degree in agriculture business from Butler Community College in May while competing on the livestock judging team. She is continuing her studies in corporate communications and involvement in the judging world at West Texas A&M University this fall.

When she isn't at a contest or practicing with teammates, she spends time managing Born Pretty Jewelry Company.

With encouragement from her mom and Mimi, Sumpter leapt into the business June 2021.

"We actually were at state track in Albuquerque, New Mexico, for my brothers, and we stopped in at a jewelry store," she says. "I remember I bought a small lot then, and it kind of just bloomed into Born Pretty."

She's used social media platforms and a website to market her pieces to customers all around the country. Sumpter says with opportunities to set up shop at cattle shows, *The Business Breed* has produced a community for her.

"I have many friends that I've met through Angus that support my business and promote my jewelry. I always look forward to junior nationals because I get to see those people and reconnect with them," Sumpter says.

Born Pretty sells everything from turquoise earrings to sterling silver beads that are all Native, handmade pieces. Sumpter explains how important authenticity is with the jewelry because each piece is uniquely created. She sources the

pieces from Native makers and says she appreciates their time and hard work put into everything she sells.

Her work begins with promotion of the pieces along with customer service inquiries.

"There definitely have been some challenges, and I would say one of the biggest has been learning how to utilize Facebook and Instagram algorithms," she says. "I definitely haven't perfected it, but it is very challenging understanding when to post and how to reach the right group of people."

Sumpter explains some days 300 people will see a post, while others she is lucky to see 20 people engage with the page. Aside its imperfections, social media has allowed her to continue the business in a new stage of life.

"I had my customers in Colorado and New Mexico, and I was really worried when I moved to Kansas that I would lose those people. But luckily through social media, I was able to hang on to them," Sumpter explains. "I met a whole other group of people in Kansas. I was very fortunate for that, but it was a big scary step for me to take."

Though she's busy with schoolwork, judging practice, working as a livestock photographer and involved in the Angus breed — she says she finds time to chat with makers and business has been good, even with relocation.

Sumpter sees the future of Born Pretty Jewelry Company growing once she completes her degree, and hopes to someday become a vendor at the National Finals Rodeo (NFR) or at a larger livestock show.

"For now, I'm very happy and content spending my last few years as an exhibitor just being able to enjoy

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time at shows with my family and livestock while setting jewelry up on the side,” she adds.

An charismatic investment

Entrepreneurship is in Walter Shealy's blood. From growing up helping at his father's ice cream shop in Charleston, S.C., to taking out his first loan to buy a farm at just 16 years old, the rancher has always doubled as a businessman.

He operates many small businesses in addition to stewarding to his cattle herd located on the Black Grove Ranch in Newberry, S.C. Last October his family opened The Venue, an events center, on the ranch.

Shealy says the original structure wasn't intended for such usage, but with unfortunate weather causing damage to the building, they were forced to change their approach.

“We were going to do a nationwide video sale, and the worst thunderstorm that I've ever seen in my life around here hit us about an hour before the sale,” he says. “We got 2.14 inches of rain in 45 minutes.”

The family prevailed and continued with their sale that day, but had a difficult decision to make with their damaged facility.

“We made an investment, but if we were going to get in this [event center business], we needed to do it the right way, which I think is critical,” Shealy says. “We tore the roof off, tore the sides off, got everything down to the frame and enhanced the framing of the building and roof.”

With a foundational makeover and encouragement from a dear friend, the space transformed. The Venue is now a location for people to gather for special moments in their lives from Christmas parties and

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— WALTER SHEALY

corporate functions to weddings.

“My wife and I like to dance,” Shealy says. “When you go out to most places, whether it's a hotel or wedding event center, people have small dance floors. I said, 'I don't want to have a small dance floor,' so we built a 1,200-square-foot floor, and that's become a big hit with people.”

With walls paneled with pecan-tree wood from the ranch to the Black Grove bull statue that welcomes patrons at the front of the driveway, Shealy says The Venue holds personality and character.

“Whether you're looking at a cow, you're looking at a piece of real estate or you're looking where you want your dream wedding to be, first impressions are critical. We have a gorgeous first impression,” he explains.

The cost-free bonus of nature's beauty has made the investment worthwhile to him. With children finding work off the farm and spending less time with the herd, The Venue has become a priority from a revenue-generating standpoint. Shealy advises others looking to start their own business to consider the upfront sacrifices before jumping in.

“If you don't have a lot of excess time, then you don't want to get in the rental business,” he notes. “Given how much time you have in raising cattle and all we have to do, time is one of your most precious assets.”


His wife, Jean, has been a timesaver as well as pertinent in the success of their business.

“We have a hidden asset, or if you will, an inspiration for what we do, or someone else who is

accountable. My wife ... we've been married 52 years, she is a professional accountant,” he says. “We have the benefit of having an excellent financial management partner in what we do.”

Though Jean has since retired and they've found external help, the couple still prioritizes the family-oriented side of their business. As they've grown older together, the Shealys have made tough but necessary decisions to stay current with their businesses.

“We are in the process of cutting the herd in half, and when we get the herd down to the size, we want to have about 60 mother cows. By cutting the herd down, I have the time to be able to do The Venue,” Shealy says. “It's a better utilization of our time and we can still do what we love, be in the cattle business and have the adjunct business.”

With more time dedicated to The Venue, Shealy hopes to continue booking events with customers in the future and says it's only the beginning for this labor of love. 



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