

Listening to Lanting

In this annual feature, Board Chairman Bob Lanting answers questions posed by Contributing Editor Dan Rieder



Bob Lanting seated, surrounded by his family. See page 16 for complete description.

Rieder: Please provide a brief summary of your ranch and cattle history, your family, and personal information.

Lanting: My parents, William and Marguerite Lanting bought a rocky farm in the 1940's and raised cattle along with three sons: myself, Jim and John and a daughter, Patricia. Although the farm/ranch was not situated in a wet climate, (9 inches/year) our family managed a good living. Even today, my two brothers and I are using the original farm/ranch and have expanded extensively. Today we farm 1,200 acres and graze 4,500 acres of private and BLM dry grazing. Lanting Enterprises presently runs 330 registered Simmental females, red and black. We market 90 bulls per year by private treaty. Over 40 years we have developed a herd of cattle that can excel in our high desert environment. Our bulls have been conditioned to perform in rough range conditions, resulting in repeat buyers.

After receiving extensive training in "hard work," from my Dad, I went on to the University of Idaho. I received a BS in animal science and most importantly, met and later married Rhea, the love of my life, in 1971. We were

blessed with three children — all were involved in 4-H, sports and music and attended the University of Idaho, Jodie, 40; Justin, 37; and Kim, 35. My son is the business manager of Olympia School District, Jodie is an FFA advisor and Science teacher and Kim is a registered Dietician. Jodie and Kim have both married ranchers (I warned them about marrying ranchers!). I am a proud Grandpa of five grandchildren.

I have been fortunate to be involved in various community organizations; Church, School Board and Farm Service Agency. Cattle industry involvement includes: Idaho Simmental Association: Idaho Cattle Association director; and 1989 Outstanding Young Cattlemen in Idaho; Cattlemen's Beef Board, from 1993-1999; Southern Idaho Livestock Hall of Fame 2010; and Trustee for the Western Region of the ASA, serving in my sixth year.

My pastime priorities are to be involved in grandchild activities as much as possible. As chairman of the ASA, I enjoy viewing Simmental cattle and meeting ASA members. The best people in the world are those involved in the cattle industry. Thanks for all your support.

Rieder: *What were your thoughts as you assumed this leadership post?*

Lanting: I have great respect for the office of ASA chairman. I am privileged and excited to be chosen as your chairman. My personal goals to be selected as a trustee never led me to consider the possibility of someday being ASA chairman. Thank you for your vote of confidence.

Rieder: *During your term as Board Chairman, are there major actions you would like to see accomplished?*

Lanting: The continuation and growth of all services provided to the ASA membership, along with maintaining sufficient financial reserves are at the top of my list. However, transparency has become my new priority. Whatever I can legally share with the ASA membership will be distributed through media channels.

Rieder: *How important is it to have a wide range of diversity on the Board?*

Lanting: The diversity of trustees is absolutely necessary to maintain and improve services of all segments of the ASA. Balance from the show ring to performance, to DNA testing, all act as a catalyst to advance the ASA within our cattle industry.

Rieder: *How do you, as Board Chairman encourage all Trustees, including newly elected ones, to become active in the decision-making process?*

Lanting: As the board chairman, I am fortunate to have an exceptional board with a wide variety of skills. Every trustee has the capability to sit on the executive committee or be the next chairman. My biggest challenge is to harness their energy and provide direction and focus for a common solution. Active participation by all trustees contributes to ample discussion of each agenda item.

Rieder: *What has been the effect of Total Herd Enrollment (THE)?*

Lanting: THE with option A, B, or C provides opportunity for the ASA to gather the maximum data for accurate prediction of animal EPDs. I especially like option A, which pushes me to be accountable to provide information on every animal enrolled. Option B or C are possibly more applicable to smaller herds or partial herd enrollment.

Rieder: *How effective has ASA's carcass merit program been? Has it changed the perception of SimGenetics? How has it changed our breeds?*

Lanting: It has proved to be an excellent tool to provide users of SimGenetics significant and accurate EPDs to assist in early screening of bulls. New awareness and use of SimGenetics has become evident as our new available genetics have moved our breed forward at a rapid pace.

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Lanting's Simmental cows and calves on the feedground.



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Rieder: *How has ASA's Progress Through Performance (PTP) program contributed to breed improvement?*

Lanting: The PTP program provides that needed exposure for the cattle industry to view a sample of available SimGenetics. We all need to understand the difficulty of judging an animal based on specific performance data and visual appearance. As cattlemen, each of us need to develop our own criteria and make selections which will adapt to our environment.

Rieder: *How has the implementation of DNA markers changed the beef industry?*

Lanting: The beef industry is presently dealing with the rapid dispersal of information related to DNA markers. As more genetic defects are identified each breed is challenged with the task of how to deal with these defects.

Rieder: *Genetic defects are a major issue of discussion in the beef industry. How would you assess ASA's approach to this subject?*

Lanting: As the most popular genetic lines are bred more closely, the number of genetic defects are more likely will show an increase. The ASA has taken a scientific-based approach to manage and reduce the incidence of genetic abnormalities. Each abnormality is identified and an assessment is made to limit the economic effect on the cattle industry.

Rieder: *What are the benefits of the all-purpose index (\$API) and total index (\$TI)?*

Lanting: All-purpose index is a useful tool to select for overall genetic improvement. We need to be selective with the use of \$API. Each breeder needs to find the level of \$API score that is needed for their environment and seedstock buyers. Actually, not enough emphasis is placed on \$TI with a large number of crossbred cattle being marketed as terminal.

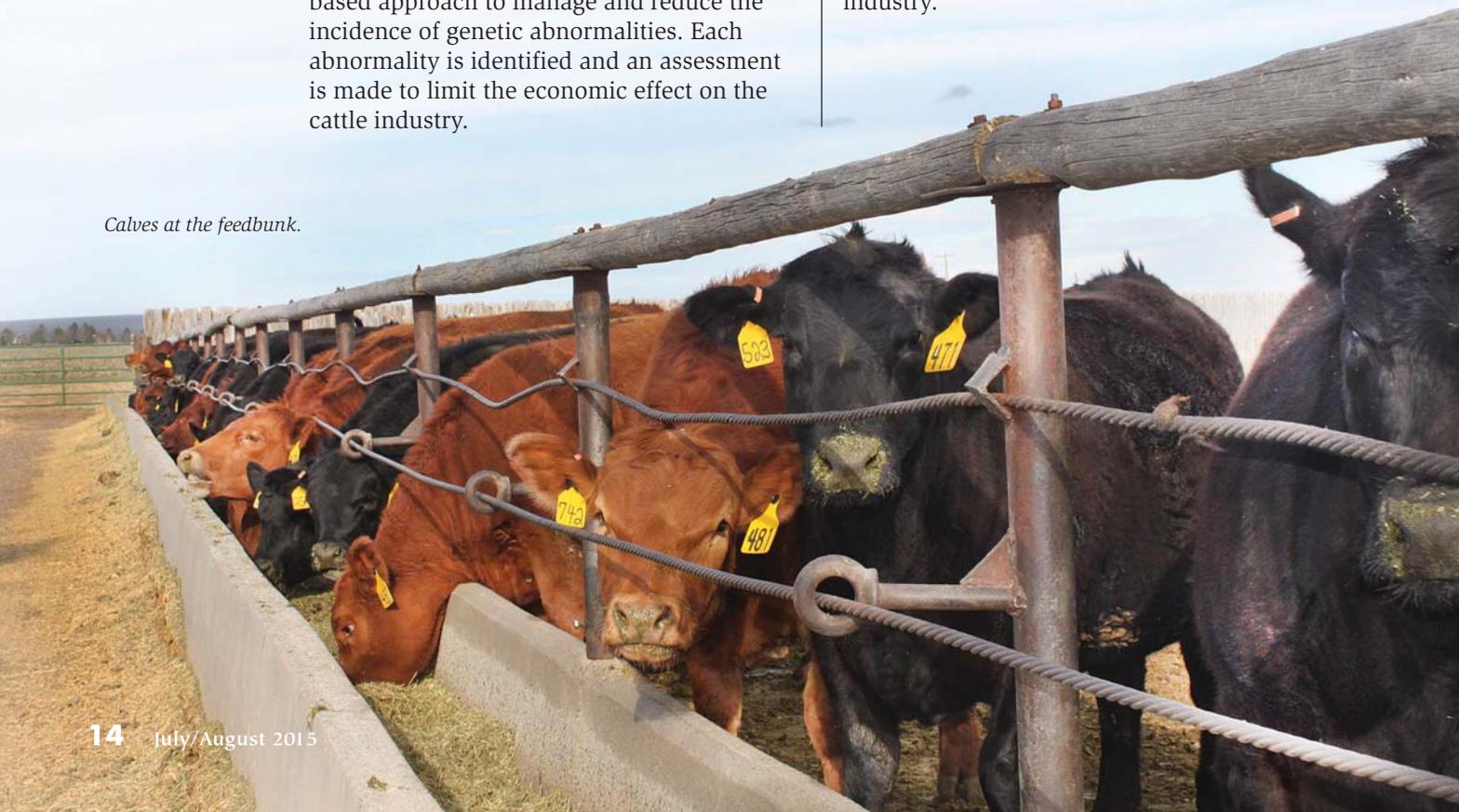
Rieder: *What is the impact of the Field Representatives?*

Lanting: The use of field representatives potentially plays a significant role in assisting breeders to promote their seedstock. Also, personal contacts with potential buyers will enhance communication. We need to realize this is a work in process and every contact is different requiring flexibility within our field representative visit.

Rieder: *What are the benefits of a National Show?*

Lanting: The National Show is a showcase of cattle which provide needed exposure of SimGenetics. Thanks to breeders efforts that show their cattle, Simmental cattle have been established as a major breed within the cattle industry.

Calves at the feedbunk.



Rieder: *What is your assessment of ASA's youth program?*

Lanting: Our youth program brings together the ultimate experience for developing future leaders in the livestock industry. We need to be thankful for the monetary contributions, along with the widespread support of staff, parents and the youth.

Rieder: *Comment on the significance of the ASA Foundation.*

Lanting: The ASA Foundation over the past two years has been refocused and restructured. The commitment from the Foundation Board has been to set goals to not only provide scholarships to youth, but to support educational programs, initiate research projects, and encourage many more industry studies. All of these funds are raised by hard-working Foundation Board members to secure charitable donations for priority projects. Thanks to ASA Foundation.

Rieder: *How vital are strong state associations to the overall welfare of SimGenetics?*

Lanting: State Associations are the backbone of the ASA. These ASA members provide added exposure of SimGenetics to their respective regions. Although, cost sharing programs

provide support to state associations, their own creative promotional programs enhance the overall welfare of SimGenetics.

Rieder: *How secure is the Association from a financial standpoint?*

Lanting: Many of you are aware of the large expenditures, namely building a new headquarters and expenses dealing with legal matters. Also, we have a very proactive budget to move us forward with our breed activities. With all of this, we are still able to maintain a healthy \$4 million dollar balance in our reserves that is kept entirely for unseen financial expenditures in the future.

Rieder: *Discuss the decision to construct a new headquarters building.*

Lanting: Every decision has its time and place. The time had come to upgrade the ASA headquarters dedicated in 1974. After an in-depth study an estimate approaching \$500,000 to re-model was presented. After months of dialogue and discussion, the ASA board voted first to purchase the property on Campbell Road in Bozeman. As funds were available without using our reserves, the board first voted to draw plans and secure building permits. The next steps lead to board approval of the sewer and roads.

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Lanting frequently hosts tour groups at the ranch, including this group of agricultural students from the College of Southern Idaho.



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Finally, a limit was placed on building construction costs resulting in our present construction project of the new headquarters building. All of this will be done for less than our potential selling price of our old headquarters and lot.

Rieder: *How important is it for ASA members to be involved in the decision-making process, through voting and attendance at local, state, regional and national meetings?*

Lanting: ASA members not only have the privilege but have the obligation to be involved in the decision making process at all levels. The more input that can be received regarding important issues the better the process works. You will find that being involved will give you the opportunity to meet outstanding individuals in the cattle industry.

Rieder: *Now that people are relying more and more electronic communication, what do you perceive as the future for ASA's publications?*

Lanting: The use of Internet and electronic communication will continue to be the trend of the future. We all need to keep up with the trends in communication in order to have the best communication within our breed. The traditional *SimTalk* and *the Register* continue to grow in advertising and content. Contact the ASA publication to see the many options that are available for you to utilize.

Rieder: *What are the historic and current strengths of this organization and our cattle?*

Lanting: Historically, the ASA has always been in the forefront of Beef Industry innovation and progress. Remember the time frame when the key slogan was; "Simmental, the Performance Breed". We all recognize that performance was good; however we wanted our breed to be much more. So as we add more data from the genetic pool, our breeders could do a better job of selection. Trends have changed significantly; lower birth rates, higher weaning weights, easier calving, lower milk, increased stability, increased marbling, and higher \$API and \$TI.

We now have a new slogan; "Profit Through Science". New data in the field of genomics will take us to a new level bringing an even more rapid change in our available genetics. International Genetic Solutions (IGS), since 2010, has become a collaboration of 12 progressive breeds to focus on the needs of commercial cattlemen. IGS has the largest multi-breed genetic evaluation system in the world with over 16 million animals and 400,000 added annually. Keeping focused on the commercial cattlemen and their needs will keep us on the right path for years to come. Working together, we can develop a partnership with the commercial cattlemen to enhance profitability.

Rieder: *Are there specific weaknesses that need to be addressed?*

Lanting: We can be our own worst enemy if we do not accept change, adapt and adjust to the needs of the cattle industry. Good communication will continue to be a key factor with the ASA membership, Trustees, and staff. We all need to look back and learn from decisions made by previous boards. The ASA is financially sound — this was not always the case. We need to raise our expectations as there is always room for new ideas to carry us forward. ♦



The Lanting family, left to right back row: son-in-law Jim Jacobs and granddaughter Blake Jacobs; son Justin; grandson Jayden Mink; son-in-law Justin Mink and daughter Jodie Mink. Front row: daughter Kim Jacobs; wife Rhea and granddaughter Reece Jacobs; Bob with grandson Jace Mink; and grandson Jarret Mink.