like many boys, Alan Miller had big dreams. Unlike many, Alan dedicated his life to making those dreams into reality. For Alan, that reality was creating Prairie View Farms Angus (PVF), a successful Angus cattle operation in Gridley, Illinois.

As a child Alan grew up on his family’s farm with a small herd of cattle and 900 acres of crop land. His grandfather, Adam Schlipf, began an Angus cattle herd in the late 1940s, and Alan’s father, Orlan, took over the small herd and added Angus females for his children to show.

One of five siblings, Alan knew that in order to come back to the farm full-time he would have to diversify his father’s operation. After his last year of showing as a junior, Alan sold his bred-and-owned heifer from that year and invested those profits into what became the foundation donor for PVF. In 1994, just 21 years old, Alan purchased what he calls “the building block” of his herd, Davis Proven Queen 3026.

Alan continued to build his herd while as he attended the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. He worked full-time for the university while completing graduate degrees and relied on family help, especially from his father, to care for the expanding herd during his schooling.

Alan links his ability to succeed with the support he received from his parents, stating, “At seventeen years old my father was allowing me to call the shots. I was the one who made the mistakes, and I was the one who was able to learn directly from those mistakes I made.”

His wife, Theresa, says there were a lot of times Alan gave up collegiate activities most young adults participate in while in college so that he could go home to help with the Angus operation. He was so focused on his dream that he did whatever it took for him to achieve it.
Theresa and Alan met in high school when their opposing schools were playing each other in a basketball tournament. Theresa, a cheerleader, and Alan, a basketball player, were introduced through a mutual friend, and after the first date they have been going strong. The bottom line is that this is a costly business. It is challenging to maintain a leading position when most females are owned through partnerships in embryo transfer programs, so it’s difficult to maintain a cash flow that supports my family.

The other challenge PVF encounters is finding new ways to market show females and meet the needs of all customers. Everyone likes to buy cattle differently, and it is our goal to have a market for everyone, he remarked.

Most animals are sold privately, and Alan enjoys that, as he is able to personally interact with each customer and tailor genetic selection to each customer’s needs. However, as the herd has expanded PVF has adopted new methods, such as creating a website and having an online sale in order to stay in the forefront.

“We have been very fortunate to sell cattle all over the United States, and I partially credit the website for that, as it has opened new doors for selling cattle right from the comfort of our home by allowing us to upload pictures and videos for customers who cannot make it to the farm."

Recently, PVF began utilizing Fertilization (IVF). Alan and his family depend on the use of sexed semen has been a marketing strategy. Here are some examples of things that are working at PVF:

- Marketing Tips for Success

  One point that the Millers feel has been helpful in building their success is realizing that different customers require different marketing strategies. Here are some examples of things that are working at PVF, as well as some additional tips that the Millers have found helpful:

  • On-Farm Production Sales: This is a relatively new marketing tool at PVF that they use to highlight their production sales in April and look forward to using it as an annual way to market full heifer call show heifer prospects, hard sires, and cow-calf pairs.
  • Online Sale: PVF hosted an online heifer auction — one of the first Angus online auctions ever created, and it was extremely successful in selling spring show heifer prospects.
  • Private Treaty Sales: Not forgetting what worked in the past, PVF still utilizes private treaty sales for show heifer prospects, cow sales and bull sales.
  • Website: Their website, prairieviewfarm.com, has proven to be an effective means of finding new customers for their farm for private treaty, as well as consignment sale and production sale business.

PVF new Horizon, national Junior Angus Association

PVF Location: Gridley, Illinois
Angus cattle farm operation
Show cattle, high school sweethearts, private treaty sales, embryo transfer, PVF New Horizon, National Junior Angus Association

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