

IN BRIEF

Elkwood farm joins Angus association

Scawfell Farm Inc., located in Elkwood, is a new member of the American Angus Association, according to John Crouch, executive vice president of the national breed registry organization in Saint Joseph, Mo.

The American Angus Association, with more than 34,000 active adult and junior members, is the largest beef cattle registry association in the world. Its computerized records include detailed information on more than 14 million registered Angus.

The association records ancestral information and keeps production records on individual animals for its members. These permanent records help members select and mate the best animals in their herds to produce high quality, efficient breeding cattle, which are then recorded with the American Angus Association. Most of these registered Angus are used by the U.S. farmers and ranchers who raise high quality beef for U.S. consumption.

Almond growers seeking more time

FRESNO, Calif. — The largest organization of almond growers is asking the government for a six-month delay before enforcing a new rule requiring all California almonds to be pasteurized, saying farmers can't meet the original deadline.

In January, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced it would require virtually all almonds to be pasteurized by Sept. 1, following Salmonella outbreaks in 2001 and 2004 that were traced to raw almonds.

Now the California Almond Board wants to delay implementation date to March 1, 2008, to give pasteurization facilities time to validate their processes and machinery and avoid interrupting the flow of nuts to the market.

Almonds have become increasingly lucrative as they've gained popularity with health-conscious consumers. California's 6,000 almond farmers expect to harvest a \$1.4-billion-plus bumper crop this year from a flat strip of farmland sandwiched between the Pacific coast and the Sierra Nevada mountains.

Pa. officials declare drought watch

HARRISBURG, Pa. — State officials have declared a drought watch across most of Pennsylvania, and asked residents to curtail water use while the dryness continues.

While they say reservoirs appear to be in good shape, farm officials warned that the state's corn crop could sustain significant damage, and weather forecasters said the dry spell should stretch through August.

"For the next month in general, conditions don't look overly good for a wet pattern," said National Weather Service hydrologist Peter Jung in State College.

CONTRIBUTED AND WIRE REPORTS

FARM & GARDEN

Babe's last stand at Little Big Horn

Okay, we're still doing the touristy thing this week — Yellowstone Park, Wyoming and Little Big Horn, Montana where Gen. Custer made his famous Last Stand. Not only did we visit the site, but we had a once-in-a-lifetime experience riding across the very same country that Custer, Reno, Bente and the men of the 7th Cavalry did all those years ago. But more on that later.

Yellowstone Park is, of course, a famous landmark, worthy of a stay lasting at least several days. We only managed the lower loop in a day (at a considerable pace, I might add), but you could easily — and indeed should — spend far more time there to make the most of the amazing scenery and wildlife present in the park. Words cannot do it justice, but it is undoubtedly one of America's greatest treasures, as indeed the whole State Park and National Park network is — we really admire the way you guys have set this up for the benefit of both us humans and the wildlife within.

We did the "Old Faithful" thing where the geyser goes off at regular intervals, looked in awe at some incredible gorges, waterfalls and fast flowing rivers, and, of course, joined the queues of motorists stopping randomly on the roadside to witness a passing elk/deer/moose/buffalo, etc.

It was easy to spend hours just marvelling at the scenery, some of which seemed almost prehistoric, with steam rising from various pockets of the landscape — expecting any minute to see some giant dinosaur come bounding round the corner!

Speaking of dinosaurs, if you really want to see an excellent exhibition, go visit the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman, Mont.

Montana has had more findings of dinosaurs than almost anywhere else in the U.S. and unlike a lot of museums, most of the exhibits there are the genuine thing, not replicas — and it's pretty darn educational too!

However, the best advice I could give anyone who wants to know more about Yellowstone is to go and see it for yourself. You will not be disappointed, but you really need to make sure you give yourself plenty of time to fully enjoy it!

From Yellowstone we travelled a further 200 miles or so down I-90 to get to a place on the doorstep of Custer's Battlefield — the 7th Ranch in Garryowen, Mont. run by Chip and Sandy Watts. This is pretty much a five-star RV camp with some horse corrals and pens for those crazy horse folk like us who are just



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The horse travelers spent some time last week at Yellowstone National Park, where they were particularly awed by the incredible gorges, rivers and waterfalls. They then moved on to the area surrounding Little Big Horn.



DAVID AND ANITA HASBURY-SNOGLES

passing through.

The only downfall of the place that we could see was that you couldn't ride your own horses on the grounds or surrounding areas, which was all down to legal issues, insurance and property rights, etc.

However, the *piste de resistance* of the 7th Ranch are the historical trail rides that Chip provides over most of the actual terrain that Custer's troops rode way back in 1876. Of course, we can't actually ride over the area designated as a National Museum, but we rode the fences along it for quite a ways.

We were also lucky enough to be accompanied by Gilbert, a native Crow Indian who filled us in on some of the background from the 'other side's' point of view!

Chip is an amazingly knowledgeable man when it comes to the Battle of Little Big Horn, and he regularly gives tours and talks on the history of the battle. It's more of a vocation with him than a job, and his enthusiasm for the history and sheer wonder of the place



Chip Watts, who runs the 7th Ranch in Garryowen, Mont., leads a historical trail ride around the area traversed by General Custer and his troops in 1876.

(the landscape alone is stunning in itself) is more than self-evident. Chip is also a true horseman at heart and loves to ride both horses and mules across the rolling countryside — the Ranch has a number of horses you can rent if you need one to go on one of Chip's guided tours, although it has to be said this isn't something for the faint-hearted or those on a tight budget!

The day of the ride, Babe, one of Chip's oldest and fondest mules (she was 36) suffered a bout of colic, but we had some medicine with us that we hoped would help and, duly administered by

Chip, she seemed to be making a recovery, so we all saddled up and headed out to the battlefield.

We had a great and adventurous ride across something like 10 miles of real Custer territory, although towards the end of the ride Chip received a phone call to tell him that Babe hadn't made it.

It was a sad end to a great day, but fitting, I suppose, that Babe should end her days at the moment we were all re-living the last glorious stand of General George Armstrong Custer. After all, it wasn't just the soldiers and the Indian

braves who gave their lives in honor of their respective causes, their trusty steeds did too, and many of them, it is speculated, were shot by Custer's men to act as barricades in the final throes of battle — and they have their own monument on Last Stand Hill to prove it.

Until next week

David and Anita Hasbury-Snogles are British residents riding across the United States on horseback to raise money for charity. Visit HorseQuestUSA.org for more information. David can be reached at david_hasbury@yahoo.com.

Smithfield Foods to slaughter some 16,000 pigs

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TIMISOARA, Romania — Some 16,000 pigs will be slaughtered at a farm belonging to Smithfield Foods Inc., the world's top pork producer, after a second outbreak of swine fever at one of the com-

pany's farms in less than a week, an official said Tuesday. The discovery came Monday at a farm in the southwestern village of Igris, 38 miles west of Timisoara near the Hungarian border, according to Radu Roatis, who heads Romania's Veterinary

Heath Authority. More outbreaks were expected, Roatis told reporters. "There are other farms that do not have all the health authorizations and do not respect" animal and environmental safety rules, he said.

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