

**D**ave Guyer, Robinson, Ill., has built a name for himself – a name based on reputation, respect and a passion for the industry. Perhaps you know him as the man behind Guyer Cattle Company, ShowRite Feeds, or Natural Solutions for Livestock. Or, maybe it's the innovative livestock care and fitting clinics he conducts nationwide.

Whatever the reason, there's a good chance you know the name Dave Guyer. He says he's spent his lifetime doing what he knows how to do. In the process, he's become a leader in the livestock industry – gaining the respect of live-

stock enthusiasts nationwide.

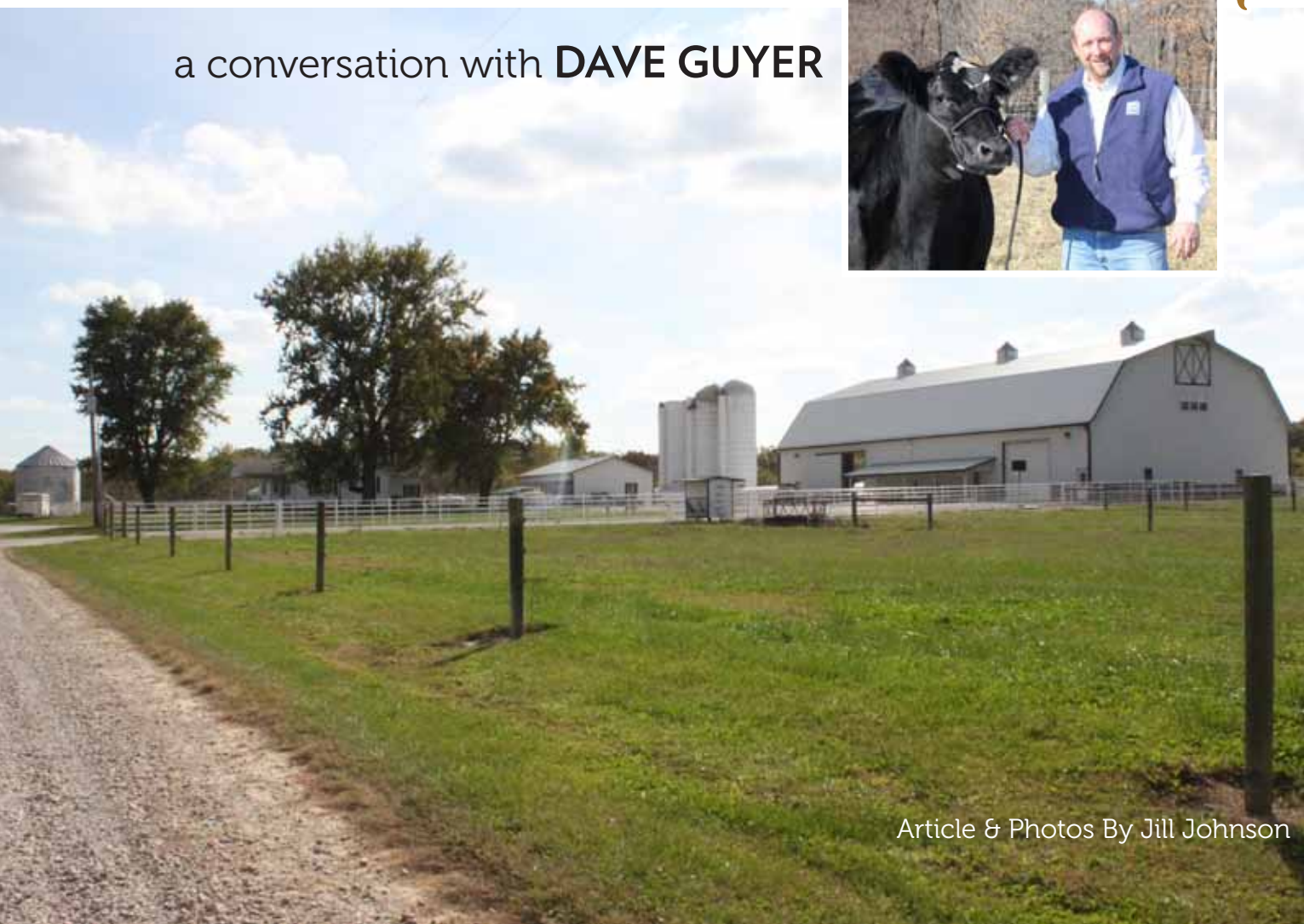
He says you have to learn to walk before you run. True success is not given, you have to earn it. And for Dave, that success comes from hard work and the foundation of family.

Dave grew up just 15 miles north of his current sale facility. He became involved with livestock at a young age – through 4-H. Initially, his family raised Suffolk sheep, but when he was 10 years old he took an interest in cattle.

"I don't really know why I got into cattle – I just liked being around them," he says. "I never won any major shows or anything, but for some reason I just kept on that path."

## Driven To The Top

a conversation with **DAVE GUYER**



Article & Photos By Jill Johnson



Dave developed a passion for raising and showing cattle early on and worked with several mentors that fueled his fire.

"I remember, as a kid, sitting on the curb at the Illinois Beef Expo and watching the big wheels clip and fit and thinking I wish I could do that," he says.

Dave became a student of the livestock industry, learning as much as he could from as many cattlemen as possible, like Jim and Bob Horsley, Tom Fitzpatrick and Lloyd Stone.

"I remember the first time I got chewed for not getting one washed out right," he says. "You live and you learn. We didn't have educational programs back then."

Dave says he traveled to a lot of shows and worked on cattle for free. He never asked for payment. He just wanted to learn. Payment eventually came in the form of a puppy Jim Horsley gave him for all of his hard work.

He also recalls his first trip to the North American International Livestock Exposition in the mid 1980s.

He recalls how things were different then. He didn't have Andis 2-speeds at the time. All he had to clip with were a pair of flat heads. He cut his eye-teeth with them.

"When I went to Louisville for the first time, all I was worried about was finding someone that had a pair of sheep heads instead of me clipping with a pair of flatheads turned upside down," Dave remembers.

Working for those cattlemen paid off. The highlight of his 4-H career was winning the Chianina junior show at Louisville. "I learned so much from them."

### Hitting a big one

Dave's early success was in smaller rings, but he sold his first "high-dollar" calf in cooperation with Regan Bowman (now his brother-in-law) to Bob May in the early 1990s, which won the State Fair of Texas. He says it was off to the races from there.

"I was working for Moorman Feeds at the time and knew I had to either focus on the job or dedicate myself to the livestock industry," he explains.

For Dave, the choice was simple. He quit his job and formed Guyer Cattle Company.

### The cattle

In 1994, he moved to Tipton, Ind. He says this was a great location for sales and built a strong customer base. He met his wife, Lucy, in 1999, and in 2000 they bought his family's farm. This move allowed him to establish a cow herd of nearly 300 head and focus on the production side of the business.

Over the past decade, Guyer Cattle Company has had their finger in a champion at almost every major show across the country and has won every Midwestern state fair.

"One of the people who helped us acquire such a track record in recent years was Chad Day. He started as a young 4-Her who bought calves from me and ended up playing a major role in the modern-day success of Guyer Cattle Company."

Through his Chosen Few sale and steer and heifer bid-off sale, combined with his partnership with Steve Bonham, Dave markets cattle all over the country.

"With Steve's relationship

and cooperation, I have an avenue to better market cattle and get more numbers to better serve my northern customers," Dave says.

### A desire to help

Through his cattle, Dave ventured into other avenues of the livestock business. He values youth education and giving back to the industry.

"I have a real passion for kids and education in the livestock industry," he says. "This industry teaches responsibility and life lessons."

He held his first fitting and livestock care clinic eight years ago, when he became an ambassador with Kirk Stierwalt.

"I've been hosting clinics ever since. Whether it's through 4-H clubs, feed company sponsorships or Stock Show U, I'll always want to find a way to help kids," Dave declares.

"I'm very proud of the young people that I've worked closely with over the years that have gone on to be very successful in the livestock industry today."

His clinics cover topics that range from selection, feedings, daily care, fitting, clipping and showmanship.

Dave is also passing the gift of giving on to his daughter, Ashtin. She won her county fair steer show last year and with the help of her dad, set up a scholarship fund for the county 4-H program with the proceeds from the sale of her steer.

"With the establishment of this scholarship, we hope to set an example for 4-H programs across the state," he says. "If we don't do something for the kids, a lot of the programs will go downhill."







## Building a brand

Dave's most recent business venture is with Natural Solutions for Livestock, a company he developed from the ground up.

"A friend called me one day with an idea for creating a product for joints," he asserts. "My initial thought was that I didn't need another thing to do, but I gave it a little more thought and decided to set up a meeting. Before I knew it, we came up with Natural Stride, the beginning of Natural Solutions."

Dave's goal was to sell one ton of the product across the country in the first year. If he met that goal, he would continue the business – if not, he would just walk away. The product was an instant success and sold 15.5 tons in the first year. From there, Natural Solutions for Livestock was born and added products like GLUCoat, Hide and Hair, and endorsement of products such as ShowRite show feed.

Dave is currently preparing for the release of equine and canine Natural Stride.

"What started out as a bucket of product has turned into several lines of merchandise, four full-time and one part-time employee and will reach \$1 million in sales by the end of this year," he offers.

Dave says he is fortunate to have other companies like Sullivan Show Supply, Valley Vet and ShowRite Feed Stores sell his

products nationwide.

Dave currently focuses more on the marketing of Guyer Cattle Company and Natural Solutions for Livestock. He's cut back on his cow numbers and relies more on embryo transfer.

## The Way To the Top

Dave attributes his success with Guyer Cattle Company and Natural Solutions for Livestock to the way he conducted business as a young person.

"When I was just starting out, I was the new kid on the block, but I conducted business in a respectable way and stood behind everything I sold – and I still do," he says.

Dave finds it hard to believe that he's been doing what he loves for so long and that raising cattle has brought forth so many opportunities.

At one time his dad had told him to enjoy showing cattle but not get caught up in it, because he couldn't make a living at it. But Dave always knew he could, although he never dreamed he would spend more time on the road or in the office than in the barn. But, he really enjoys the marketing side of the business and working with people.

"It's my job, but the people keep me going, and I'm dedicated to the success of the people that support my business," Dave professes.



## A family man

Dave and his wife Lucy have two children – Ashtin, 10 and Nalaney, 7.

He says the most challenging part of operating two businesses is the time it takes away from his family. For that reason, the Guyers have recently decided to focus their attention on promotion rather than production, and they will be selling their top-end cows in their upcoming Chosen Few Sale.

"Not having to spend so much time on our own cow herd will be a way for us to help our customers move onward and upward."

But make no mistake - livestock also is what brings the family together.

"Some people buy boats and take vacations for family time, but we go to livestock shows," he says. "And that's what the girls want to do. They love showing livestock and working in the barn."

Five years ago, the Guyers thought it would be cute to watch a 5-year-old Ashtin follow a pig around the show ring, and today working with and showing pigs has become one of the family's favorite get-aways from the cattle barn.

He looks forward to many more stock shows with his children and feels blessed to have his family be such a large part of his businesses.

Dave's parents, Delane and Elle, have always been a great support system and helped him get started in the beginning. His aunt Joan is the best office manager he

could ask for, and Lucy keeps everything running while he's on the road.

"I just can't brag enough about Lucy," he says. "She's the glue in our family. She tends to the home front, the cattle and the kids. I always tell the people, don't try to out-work her because you can't do it."

With his family's support, Dave says, his career has evolved to what it is today.

"I'm just going to keep doing what I've always been doing," he says. "I enjoy the livestock industry and will always stay in it for the families and the kids."

Chances are, if Dave continues doing what he does best – working hard, treating others with respect and conducting honest business – he'll be educating youth and helping livestock families succeed for years to come.

## BETWEEN the pages

