

2024 Junior Stockman Profile: Eric Fettes

Eric Fettes grew up on his family's ranch, DKF Angus, located near Gladmar, Saskatchewan. At the young age of six, Eric began his own herd of purebred Angus cattle, starting with the female Red Blue Dawn Miss Illicit 359Z. Over the years, Eric has become increasingly involved in the family operation. Today he is actively involved in all aspects of DKF Angus from selecting genetics and feeding cattle to servicing equipment and more.

Eric has been a 4-H member for 12 years. Through 4-H he developed his passion for showing cattle. His enthusiasm for the breed has only intensified over time, driving him to continually expand his knowledge of genetics and cattle production. As a result of his dedication, Eric has successfully raised numerous champions for not only himself, but also other breeders across Canada and even in the United States.

Eager to learn and engage with others in the industry, Eric frequently visits with fellow breeders to gain insights about their operations and share about his herd. He serves as a role model for younger members of the livestock community, mentoring junior participants in areas such as feed preparation, grooming and showmanship.

Eric's passion for the Angus breed and cattle industry extends far beyond the show ring and production of high-quality cattle. He also has a talent for mechanics which allowed him to help design and develop his family's hydroponics fodder system that they utilize to feed their cattle. Eric has been attending college in Saskatoon, working towards becoming a heavy duty mechanic with plans of one day becoming a journeyman heavy duty mechanic and eventually taking over the family farm.

Q&A with Eric Fettes

Why did you join the Canadian Junior Angus program?

I guess I just grew up around it. My grandparents and parents were members, and my grandma signed me up as a CJA member when I was one year old. I didn't make the decision to join but I have continued in the program because I really enjoy it.

How has Canadian Junior Angus been beneficial to you?

CJA has definitely helped put me through school and set some money aside to pay for it. I have also learned a lot about raising cattle.

When did you first know you wanted to stay involved with cattle ranching?

I have always been cattle ranching and have never really thought of doing anything else.

What has been one of your highlights or favourite memories of raising Angus cattle?

Either being selected as the 2024 Junior Stockman or winning Champion Red Angus Bull at Agribition in 2018, 2019 and in the 2020 virtual show.

Tell us about your operation.

My family's operation, DKF Angus, began in 1986 with purebred Red Angus cattle and later expanded to include Black Angus cattle. It was initially established by my grandparents, and subsequently my father became involved. Today my sister and I are both a part of the family farm. We have slowly been bringing in more Black Angus to mix with the Reds; we are almost half and half now. We have been mixing the red and black genetics together to create new genetics. The bull Razor that we used is Red



out of Black Angus parents. Mixing up the genetics trying to create new things is one of the main objectives on our operation.

On our operation we have about 150 pairs. We keep most of our yearling heifers and bulls and we sell the bulls private treaty and some of the heifers through private treaty.

At DKF Angus we utilize a fodder system. To simplify, it is just barley sprouts that we seed out. The seeds can multiply up to 10 times their original weight when sprouted. One pound of seed can make 10 pounds of sprouts, and the feed value is insane. We use strips that are 10 inches by 7.5 feet in size. Four of those strips will weigh about 60 pounds, so that will be 240 pounds of fodder which is basically the same feed value as a dry hay bale.

What are your short-term goals as a breeder? And long-term goals?

Short-term, I want to maintain the same size herd that I have now, as I am still going through school. I have about 15 cows and own some in partnership with my dad. Long-term, my goal would be to start growing my herd and eventually take over DKF and be a full partner with my dad. I want to start mixing more Black Angus into my herd.

How has your experience with the Canadian Junior Angus program been for you so far?

My experience has been good! I attended Showdown in Swift Current last year. I had to leave early for fastball playoffs which are the same weekend as Showdown, so I haven't been able to attend the past couple of years. I want to attend the full event in the future.

What is the best thing about being in the Canadian Junior Angus program?

The best part of Canadian Junior Angus is all the different people that you meet at shows and other events. I have made a lot of friends through the Angus breed.

Why would you recommend the Canadian Junior Angus program to others?

Getting involved in the CJA program is good if you're interested in the purebred cattle business. There are lots of scholarships to help put you through school and other opportunities and events.

Do you have any advice for Juniors just starting in the Angus business?

Start slow, don't begin with too many cattle. Attend as many events as you can. Be willing to learn—there are lots of older people that are willing to help out the younger ones,

especially if you are just getting involved in the Angus business. There will always be someone with more experience than you, so take advice from them.



The Junior Angus Stockman of the Year award was developed to recognize those outstanding young cattlemen who are constantly growing their 'stockmanship' capability by actively working with their Angus cattle; with actual farm involvement in day-to-day care of their livestock; learning the pedigrees and being actively involved in some breeding decisions within their operation; promoting their operation and cattle to the public through various and diversified means; growing their knowledge of nutrition, genetics and breeding; producing, selling and supporting demonstrable, reputable, notable, superior quality cattle; and understanding the relationship between our purebred Angus business and the commercial cattle and beef industry from the cow/calf producer through to the retail consumer experience. Five finalists are selected from the nominations. The winner receives a financial reward and a custom trophy buckle. Nominations are due by April 15.

For more information, please visit the Canadian Angus Foundation website at: www.cdnangus.ca/foundation/scholarships-bursaries-and-awards

