

Loading an Angus bull onto Pa's old Dodge pickup.

This event must have occurred in 1960 or 61 because Pa bought a new pickup in 1962.

He paid \$1,950 for a full-sized Chevrolet pickup, complete with AM radio, manual transmission, and spare tire.

Pa had rented the young bull to breed his Jersey heifers on pasture.

He rented the bull from farmer named Demarais near Maple Lake.

You can still rent bulls, of any breed.

Pa felt he had enough Jersey milk cows at the time.

Also, at the time, the university in Texas was promoting a Jersey-Angus cross which the Texans called Ajax.

Ajax mother beef cows had calm disposition, robust health, and superior milk production for the calf.

When the yearling bull was delivered to our farm six months ago, he was timid and barely weighed 750 pounds.



TWO-YEAR-OLD ANGUS BULL

Now, it was time to return the bull to his

owner.

I suppose a bull renter could have the animal picked up by the farmer that owned the bull for a fee, but I never asked about that.

Pa had 1950 Dodge pickup with a cattle box that he used every day.

We had hauled lots of Jersey cows and in that pickup over the years.

After spending the spring and summer with his very own herd of Jersey heifers, he weighed 1,000 pounds or more and had a mature bull's attitude.

We got the bull into the barn with the heifers easily enough.

When we trapped him in a small pen and drove the



Pa's 1950 Dodge Pickup

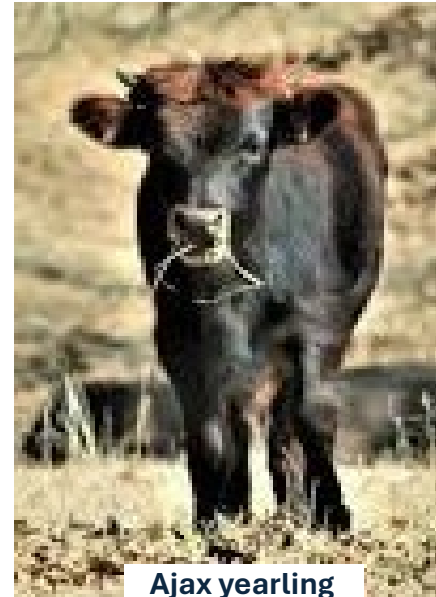
heifers out, he began to suspect something was up. We got two good rope halters on the bull without much bull wrestling. They were heavy rope halters with ten feet of lead rope and a big knot at end. Loading the bull onto the pickup box was going to be the challenge. The pickup tail gate was much too high. We did not have a cattle ramp. We had overcome that deficiency in the past by backing to an earthen ramp. Modern livestock trailers, which are easy to load, had not been invented.

Pa parked the truck in a place along side of driveway with an earthen bank. That bank reduced the step height to the tailgate to a foot. Still too high but the best we could do. We pushed and pulled the bull across the open farm yard to the pickup. We each held firmly to a lead rope, I was on the left and Pa was on the right.

There were tie-down rings permanently bolted through the floor at the front of pickup bed. When we had the beast close to the tailgate we looped a third rope around his neck and strung that through the tie-downs, then tied that rope to the truck's bumper. Now we had him.

No matter he fought whenever there was slack in the noose. We could correct that permanently, by shortening and retying. It took another half hour to get the bull properly on the pickup, slide the end-gate in place, take the noose off, and tie each lead rope through a tie-down ring. We tied him short, but not too short. The young bull could lift his head about chest high but no higher. Pa and I were taking a break to catch our breath, feeling good about a challenging task well done. We were actually walking toward the pickup, when the bull made a monstrous leap, pulled both tie-downs out the floor, got both front hooves on the roof of the cab. The bull, now free, but trailing scraps of halters and hardware, climbed off the roof and hood and went back to his heifers.

Pa, never one to waste words, shook his head, and "Demarais will have to get the bastard".



Ajax yearling



Modern Pickup towed Livestock Trailer