

ISU Angus Cow 98398: A Model of Longevity

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ISU purebred Angus cow 98398 is a story of longevity and productivity. As the oldest cow in the ISU McNay herd, she is 16 years old, born April 19, 1998 at the former ISU Rhodes Farm, Rhodes, Iowa, Marshall County. She had her first calf in 2001 and has calved every year since, including twins in 2006 and 2008. She and the rest of the ISU research Angus beef herd moved to the ISU McNay Research Farm, Chariton, Iowa, in 2004. She is due with her 16th calf this fall (a heifer), which will make 16 calves in 14 years of calving. With the 2014 calf, she will have had eight bulls and eight heifers averaging 82.5 lb at birth (Table 1). The average adjusted weaning weight of her calves is 515.4 lb (Table1).

Cow 98398 is a docile cow and will allow herself to be scratched by the herdsman. Her average weight is 1,433 lb. She has been managed with a large group of mature cows her entire life and received no special

treatment. There are about 400 Angus cows at the ISU McNay Farm. Calving occurs both spring and fall at McNay. Her udder is in good shape and her body condition and feet and legs are good. Most of her calves are due to artificial insemination.

Cow 98398, AAA registration number 13259617, has been identified as a Pathfinder cow by the American Angus Association. The Pathfinder status identifies superior cows within the Angus breed. The breeding and calving record of a cow, as well as the performance of her calves, is evaluated in the determination of Pathfinder status. In addition to being identified as a Pathfinder cow, cow 98398 is the dam of two cows that also have achieved Pathfinder status.

Cow 98398's record of Angus indices and ratios does not excel or is not remarkable in any one area. However, her record in aggregate is outstanding for productivity, reliability, and longevity. Typical purebred Angus cows usually remain productive until about 10 or 12 years of age. The average age of mature cows in the ISU McNay herd is seven years old.

Table 1. Record of calves from ISU cow 98398, ISU McNay Research Farm, Chariton, IA.

	Birth date	Birth weight (lb)	Gender	Adj. weaning wt. (lb)	
Spring herd	3/26/01	88	Bull	546	
Spring herd	4/3/02	82	Bull	559	
Spring herd	3/22/03	78	Cow	584	
Spring herd	4/8/04	109	Bull	601	
Fall herd	4/22/05	85	Cow	543	
Fall herd	9/22/06	75	Cow	561	Twin
Fall herd	9/22/06	75	Bull	589	Twin
Fall herd	9/23/07	82	Cow	480	
Fall herd	8/24/08	62	Bull	472	Twin
Fall herd	8/24/08	66	Cow	631	Twin
Fall herd	9/2/09	89	Cow	562	
Fall herd	8/28/10	82	Cow	424	
Fall herd	9/26/11	75	Bull	264	
Fall herd	8/28/12	103	Bull	400	
Fall herd	10/1/13	87	Bull	Dead*	
Total		1,238		7,216	
Average		82.5**		515.4***	

*Calf died at 7 days of age due to extreme heat.

**Average of 15 calves born.

***Average of 14 weaned calves.



Figure 1. Angus cow 98398 at the ISU McNay Research Farm, Chariton, IA.