

# BROOKOVER

## A FAMILY TRADITION

Story and photos by Betty Jo Gigot,  
Associate Editor

Last year, home from college for the summer, Ty Brookover surveyed his family's feedlot customers as to the most important trait they looked for in choosing a place to send their cattle.

"Number one turned out to be trust," Brookover said. "I guess if you think about it, that is just common sense."

This summer Ty is home for good after receiving his MBA from Northwest Missouri State, and prepared to carry on the family tradition ... a 100-year legacy of the agriculture business on the High Plains.

E. C. Brookover, Ty's father and managing partner for the family owned business headquartered out of Garden City, Ks., certainly understands Ty's enthusiasm but also is realistic about the challenges ahead for U.S. agriculture. The family owns and operates two feedlots in Kansas and one in Guymon, Ok., with an overall one-time capacity of 120,000 head, along with a farming operation. E. C. also owns and operates Feed Mercantile, a grain brokerage company.

"This last period in the cattle feeding business has been a struggle for everyone," E.C.said. "People have lost confidence in



Third and fourth generations, E.C. and Ty Brookover, are proud of their family involvement in agri-business.



Brookover Ranch Feedyard, located southeast of Garden City, Ks., is one of the three feedyards owned by the family.

"With the experience he had in California, seeing the beginning of the cattle feeding industry, Dad decided feeding would work here in Kansas," E. C. said. He built the first commercial feedlot in the High Plains on the edge of Garden City, Ks., in 1951. With six 200 head pens, Earl was on his way and never stopped, always ready for new ideas and innovations.

"The only thing that limited his growth was his ability to borrow," E. C. said. "He watched what the Gigots were doing developing irrigated circles, and in 1973 he bought the ranch to supply forage to the north feedyard."

Brookover Ranch Feedyard was built in 1974, and Texas County Feed Yard, near Guymon, Ok., was purchased in 1992.

Earl's vision of cattle feeding in the area became a reality with millions of cattle being fed and processed within a 70 mile radius and the family operation ranked 20<sup>th</sup> in capacity in the U.S. continuing his dream.

Grandson, Ty, has every intention of continuing his grandfather's vision by focusing on the people that make the whole thing work, the customer, and that key word, trust. ★

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the market. We are constantly searching for ways to provide the best possible options during trying times."

### 100 Years in Agriculture

The Brookover family originally came from Germany where they were in the textile industry. They settled in Virginia and eventually migrated to Ohio.

"My father's grandfather was born in Zanesville, Ohio. As a young man, he traded a farm in Ohio for one in Eureka, Ks., sight unseen. Grandfather homesteaded in Scott County, Ks., 100 years ago and my dad, Earl was born there in 1906."

Lured by the riches of California, Earl and his brother Forest left home in their teens, and Earl worked drilling water wells. From there he followed the drilling business to South America before returning to Kansas to attend college.

"He was working on an engineering degree but never could pass calculus," E.C.said. That did not keep Earl Brookover from being one of the most avid Kansas State fans there ever was. After a stint selling insurance, Earl moved into agriculture where he became one of the most respected pioneers of the industry.



**BRIAN PRICE**, manager of Brookover Ranch Feedyard, started in the cattle business at a very early age and has over 40 years of experience in the industry. Price is a graduate of Kansas State University.

"Here at Brookover Ranch Feedyard we strive to purchase commodities at the lowest price to help the customers by providing the lowest possible cost of gain," Price said. "With E. C.'s expertise in the market we get that done very well. We are very focused on commodity purchases, looking for high quality in order to get the maximum profit for our owners." Price is especially proud of his long-time employees and long-term customers.



**SCOTT ANDERSON**, manager of Texas County Feed Yard, was raised on a cow/calf and grain farm near Blair, Ne. He has a BA and MA degree from the University of Nebraska in ruminant nutrition.

"After getting out of school I worked at the Kansas State Experiment Station before moving to Oklahoma to be an assistant manager at a feedyard," Anderson said. Manager at Texas County since July of 2001, Anderson places special emphasis on personnel management.

"The people that work in this industry are the best and my staff at Texas County is exceptional. Some of them have worked there for over 20 years. That is loyalty. What we provide at our feedyard is a nice hotel with room and maid service." Anderson strives to be sure that his staff provides the very best of both.



**JOHN HATTON**, manager of Brookover Feed Yard and a native of Syracuse, Ks., is a graduate of Panhandle State University and has spent his entire career in feedlots in the High Plains area.

"Here at Brookover, we do our very best to give our customers the utmost flexibility," Hatton said. "We take the responsibility of feeding their cattle very seriously and work day-by-day to do the very best job possible. One of our goals is to market their cattle when they are ready and we have a very capable staff to facilitate sorting to that goal if needed. Another is to see rural America flourish and grow, and by providing the very best environment possible for their cattle, we think we can make a difference in their success." Hatton has managed Brookover Feed Yard since June of 2000. "I find it very enjoyable to work with a family owned company that understands the industry."

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