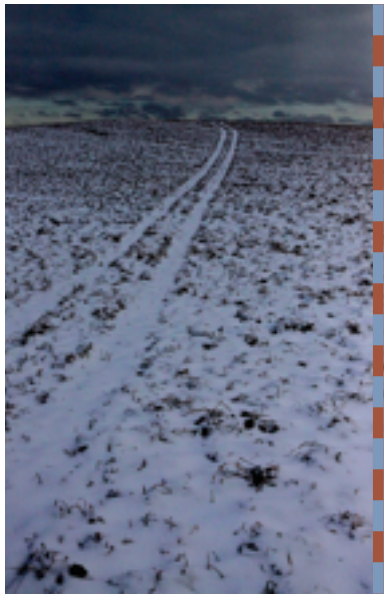




★ **CLOCKWISE** (from far left): Phil Trowbridge stands on the threshold of his barn, looking out into a blizzard. After the first significant snowstorm of the season, Trowbridge completes the evening check and feeding at one of three sites he operates in the area. Snowmobile tracks snake across the frozen fields. Steam rises from warm feed on a brisk New Year's morning.

PHOTO ESSAY

RICHARD BEAVEN



HIS PHOTOGRAPHIC SERIES *ANGUSMEN* IS A WORK IN PROGRESS, DOCUMENTING THE CATTLE RANCHERS NEXT DOOR.

By Jennings Brown

WHEN RICHARD BEAVEN MOVED TWO HOURS AWAY FROM HIS NEW YORK City home, he expected life to be a little different. But the documentary photographer had no idea he was moving next door to one of the most innovative and influential beef farmers in the Angus world.

“We arrived to cars parked everywhere and people dressed up in traditional cattle auction attire,” says Beaven. “The jeans, the boots, the hats—something I would have expected to see more of in the West, not in this part of the world.”

The Beavens had moved to their new home just as one of the Trowbridge Farms’ cattle auctions was revving up. “It was really quite a scene. So you can imagine moving up there and the first thing that you see is all this unfolding next door to you. They were actually a little concerned that this was our first impression. But we were thrilled—this was the reason that we wanted to be in that area.”

Phil Trowbridge, owner of Trowbridge Farms and vice-president of the American Angus Association, was used to city folk moving to the Hudson Valley, thinking green acres was the place for them. Brooklyn-style bars and cafes have been sprouting up throughout the farmland for the past three years. He assumed the Beavens were the same as any of his other new-to-the-country neighbors. “The surprising part was just how much they understood

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CLOCKWISE (from top left): A prospective buyer studies the sale catalog at the Trowbridge and Friends Female Sale. The sun rises over the fields as P.J. Trowbridge contemplates another bone-chilling day of work with the Angus herd. Angus cattle endure the second successive day of blizzards.



CLOCKWISE (from top left) Phil and son P.J. work the Angus cattle at one of their three sites. Chilled by a bitter wind, Phil Trowbridge stands in a shower of hay during an early morning feeding. Waiting for the first significant snowfall of winter, Trowbridge checks his herd at dusk before the worst of the weather sets in.



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about agriculture,” says Trowbridge. “We very seldom see that. Most times the new people who move into the neighborhood are so far removed from any kind of cattle or farming that they have no clue what we’re doing. And with these two I assumed—which was absolutely silly on my part—that they were the same as a lot of other folks. But they actually understood what we were doing. They were a hit right off the bat.”

The Beavens understood the rural life because Richard and his wife grew up in farming communities in England. Richard’s wife had actually trained in agriculture and raised sheep in Wales, and he had developed a love for agriculture and photography at an early age. He traces the latter passion back to primary school, when he first made a pinhole camera out of a marmalade can. Here, with his new life in Ghent, New York, he finally found a world where he could combine the two in his ongoing photo series *Angusmen*.

“I’m not really trying to document the A to Z of what Phil does,” Beaven says. “I’m trying to communicate the spirit and passion that he has. So it’s really going to my past in many ways. This whole thing has been like holding up a mirror to a little piece of our lives—or at least our past. We have two daughters now and

we’re enjoying introducing them to that scene and being a part of it. I think a lot of work that anybody does has some autobiographical aspect to it, and I think that’s why I became interested in working with Phil and telling his story.”

Beaven has been documenting the Trowbridge story for the last three years and doesn’t plan on ending the project any time soon. After all, it’s a powerful story to tell: Trowbridge’s agricultural legacy goes back four generations to when his relatives first moved from England and started Trowbridge Farms. And, despite being 130 miles from the hustle and bustle of the City that Never Sleeps, Trowbridge has managed to inspire future generations to stay in the family business and continue to revolutionize the Angus industry. “We’ve got three generations involved in our farm,” says Trowbridge. “Our son is one of our partners. We’ve got granddaughters that own cattle. And it all goes back to my father and grandfather. It’s truly a family operation.”

To learn more about Trowbridge Farms and for their upcoming sale schedule, call 518.392.0322 or visit www.trowbridgefarms.com. To see more of Richard Beaven’s *Angusmen* series, go to www.richardbeaven.com.