



### Flint Hills Ranch Couple Retirement Brings Back Lifetime Of Memories



Albert and Gayla Morgan of Alta Vista are in the front yard of their Hilltop Hereford Ranch, which sold at auction recently, as a conclusion to more than three-quarters of a century producing quality livestock and providing leadership for agriculture youth and the red meat animal industry.

The recent auction of Albert and Gayla Morgan's 160-acre Hilltop Hereford Ranch in the Flint Hills near Alta Vista is a bittersweet time for the couple and all who they've crossed paths in more than three-quarters of a century.

"When it gets so you can't take care of a place, you'd probably better turn it over to another generation," Albert Morgan, 85, evaluated days before the dispersing sale.

Seated in the chair just inches away at the kitchen table they've shared for more than 40 years, Gayla agreed, "We've worked to keep the ranch up, but the past year we haven't been able to due it justice, or like we thought it should be done."

"We decided to sell out, perhaps give somebody younger the opportunity to carry on," Albert continued. "We're moving to a home we've rented in Council Grove, so we'll be close enough to keep an eye on things."

Assisting others, especially future generations of agriculture people, is important to the Morgans, because they've been there. "I learned early in life how important the 4-H program and its leaders were for getting one's life headed forward in the right direction," recognized Albert, who claimed the Jimmy Fiddler Award as the top 4-H member in Kansas.

Also involved in 4-H as a youth, Gayla has heartfelt feeling for helping others, because of those who've stepped to her side when she lost her first husband, Lee Miller, to a farm accident after just nine years of marriage.

Then a decade later, Albert was lay preacher one Sunday morning at the rural Emmanuel Church where Gayla played the piano for the hymn Albert sang. The couple was married in 1969. "It was

the best day of my life," admitted Albert, who became a dad to Gayla's three children (Cheryl, Sharon and Mike), who moved to the ranch.

Then, it had to be the second happiest day of Albert Morgan's life when he and Gayla's daughter, Jennifer, was born in 1972. Whether the Morgans are best known for hogs or cattle is debatable, but they excelled initially in the Poland China arena producing seedstock winning in major Midwest competitions and in demand by other breeders. "We marketed a lot of Hereford bulls for breeding to other cowmen, and for several years we sold groups of Hereford bulls into old Mexico," Albert detailed.

Swine operations were dispersed in 1985, and the final Herefords were sold in 2002. Perhaps, the Morgans are most widely known for the livestock judging field day they provided livestock for and hosted on their Hilltop Hereford Ranch for 10 years in the '70s and early '80s.

While the Morgans are moving from their beloved ranch, there will be no dull moments in their new town home with four grown children, seven grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren and oodles of youth who need mentoring from a dedicated couple, Albert and Gayla Morgan, who'll just love to help in any way they can.

Greg Hallgen of Hallgren Auction & Realty at Alta Vista conducted the real estate sale advertised on AM 580 WIBW radio with Jan, Arden and Jesse Oleen of the Oleen Brothers Horned Hereford, Black Angus and Foundation Quarter Horse operation at Dwight making the purchasing bid of \$1,375 per acre for the ranch.

### Animal Traceback System In Formative Stages



A rule expected to be published early next year will establish a new state system for animal traceback in the event of a disease outbreak, according to Dr. Bill Brown, Kansas Livestock Commissioner.

Speaking at the Beef Producers Information Seminar hosted by 580 WIBW Radio kicking off the 2010 Flint Hills Beef Fest in Emporia, Brown said the rule will likely become effective in 2013.

The new animal traceback system will protect producer confidentiality, which is an industry priority. Eight states already have the system in place.

The rule will be mostly voluntary, other than a provision requiring identification of animals moving across state lines," Brown explained.

Official identification for the program will range from calfhood vaccination tags to electronic markers.

State veterinarians and animal health officers are working to standardize traceback system as much as possible between states, with the state-operated program being oversight by USDA.

A Kansas working group of ranchers, feeders and other animal interests will provide input on how the program should be structured.

The Kansas Animal Health Department is in the process of implementing an information management system called USA Herds to track livestock.

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### Padre says:

"Friendship isn't a big thing - it's a million little things."