The first progeny for the research study are due in spring 2013. Kronberg and Jerome Stenberg, who raised 509, are eager to see the calves and watch their performance.

Stenberg also emphasizes that the study is a very big deal for gaining valuable insight for future genetics in the Angus breed.

"These researchers could have gone to any breed, but they chose black Angus," he says.

In the feedlot

A second North Dakota research project involving Angus genetics is taking place at NDSU's Carrington Research Extension Center. North Dakota Angus producers have teamed with researchers there to increase their knowledge of cattle feeding in northern climates.

The inaugural program is called North Dakota Angus University and is a partnership between the North Dakota Angus Association (NDAA) and the Carrington research facility. The program allows Angus producers to retain ownership of their cattle during the feedlot finishing period so they can assess the performance and carcass traits of the animals from their herd.

Additionally, the cattle will be utilized in feedlot research that may improve cattle feeding methods. As examples, the program will allow for:

- Comparing performance resulting from feeding recommended or higher protein levels in feedlot finishing diets.
- Using corn stover as bedding to reduce heat stress during summer feedlot finishing.
- Evaluating the potential of corn stover as bedding to hold nutrients in manure that will be used as field crop fertilizers.

PHOTO COURTESY JEROME STENBERG

►Two sons of Stenberg Coalition 509 (pictured) were purchased for a joint effort by NDSU and the NGPRL to establish a foundation Angus herd to evaluate range efficiency traits.

North Dakota researchers say the partnership will also help increase awareness of the potential for summer feedlot cattle finishing in North Dakota, while also promoting the use of the diverse grain and crop coproducts available in the region. The project should also help producers assess the value that can be realized by feeding cattle in the state instead of shipping them to other states for feedlot finishing.

In May, both yearling cattle and fall calves were consigned to the study for a total of about 139 head of cattle from six North Dakota Angus producers. The yearlings are being marketed late September with the fall calves marketed in November or December. NDSU's Vern Anderson reports that all of the animals are gaining 4.5 pounds (lb.) to more than 5 lb. per day in the trial.

Angus breeder Mike Wendel of LaMoure, N.D., consigned 65 yearlings to the project, about 15 are from his own herd and the remaining are from customer's herds who use Wendel's seedstock genetics. Wendel has 200 registered Angus, which are bred with synchronization and artificial insemination (AI). Some embryo transfer (ET) is also done within the herd. He hosts a production sale each May.

Wendel has ultrasound scanned progeny from his herd for carcass data, but is participating in this study to get the actual carcass data back from the grid.

He is also interested in the economics of the feeding trial. Wendel raises corn, sorghum and irrigated alfalfa and is expanding his current feedlot to about a 400-head capacity. He has kept a cohort group of steers at home, feeding them for a more modest gain. At the end of the study, the more aggressive feeding program at the Carrington Center will be compared with his less aggressive program for gain, cost of gain, carcass traits and net return.

Wendel, who also serves on the NDAA board of directors, is excited about the research partnership. He concludes, "It's a great opportunity to promote Angus genetics in the state."

The North Dakota Corn Utilization Council and the North Dakota State Board of Agricultural Research and Education provided funding for the research trial.