

Judging the Karnes County Jr. Livestock Show

by Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz

In the late 1980's, I was asked to serve as the beef cattle judge at the Karnes County Jr. Livestock Show in Karnes City, Texas. I was told all my life that this was the county of Panna Maria, Texas and there were several Polish communities in the region. It is interesting to note in 1979, I had applied to be the Karnes County Agriculture Agent. However, I did not get the position because I did not have enough experience at the time. I was very disappointed because I really wanted to be the county agent in Karnes County with many Polish people living in this region. With this said, when I was invited to judge the Karnes County Jr. Livestock Show, I was thrilled and very excited. I did not know anyone in the area, but I knew there were many Polish descendants in Karnes County.

The day came for me to judge, and I began to evaluate the first class of halter market beef steers with four steers in the first class. I have always been proud of my Polish heritage, and I was in Karnes County, the home of Panna Maria! So, when I finished placing the first class, I began giving my oral reasons for the placings through the microphone in Polish. I can remember the four steers to this day, and I began to discuss my reasons for the placings in Polish, talking about the red steer versus the black one and the difference in finish, muscle, and confirmation. After I finished discussing the first class of four steers in Polish, I discussed them in English. By this time, I had the entire county paying attention and wondering who this young man was and where did he come from?

When I finished judging the show, I had a large crowd of people follow me to my pickup to meet me and to learn more about me. I must say, I believe every Polish person walked me to my vehicle, especially all the elderly men and women that spoke Polish. To this day, I will never forget the look on the audience's faces when I began to speak in Polish, and I will cherish these memories forever. The Polish people of Karnes County were excited to meet a Polish Aggie!!

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