

# Livestock Production

## Angus breeder rehabs pasture

BY LON TONNESON

**H**AVE you ever seen potential in a tough-looking piece of ground and thought you could make it more productive and valuable?

Brandon Peterson, Alcester, S.D., did.

Brandon and his wife, Becky, own and operate Peterson Angus, a purebred cattle business. Several years ago, they bought a 77-acre pasture along the bluffs of the Big Sioux River that needed some work. Parts of the pasture had been overgrazed, the soil was eroding, and a creek and dugout that served as water sources in the pasture were filling up with silt.

Brandon figured he'd fix up the pasture. His plan was to repair the dam, clean out the dugout, fence off the creek and cross-fence the pasture to create a rotational grazing system.

### Key Points

- Pasture rehab enhances water quality and increases forage.
- Solar pump is used to move water from fenced-off dugout to tanks.
- Rotational grazing boosts the cool-season grass growth 50%.

He went to his local Natural Resources Conservation Service office for advice and design help and applied for an Environmental Quality Incentives Program grant for about 50% of the cost of the project.

A contractor rebuilt the dam, creating a spillway to prevent water from topping the dam and washing it out, and cleaned out the dugout behind the dam.

The Petersons fenced off the dam and the creek to keep cattle out of the water and off the banks.

**BETTER PASTURE:** Brandon Peterson and son, Blake, check the water in a stock tank that is filled from the fenced-off dugout in the background. A solar-powered pump moves the water up the hill to the tank.

The next step was to get water from the dugout to stock tanks in different parts of the pasture. There wasn't any electricity nearby that could be used to pump water from the pond to stock tanks. Trenching a line to the pond would cost too much.

Brandon thought a solar pump would work and talked to Common Sense Manufacturing, Faulkton, S.D. The company designed a system that consists of a solar panel that powers a floating pump. The system pumps water to three bottomless stock tanks.

Building a new fence was the final step. The Petersons replaced the perimeter barbed-wire fence with a four-strand barbed/one-strand high-tensile electric wire fence. They cross-fenced the pasture into five paddocks with a single strand of



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