

## Deanna Munson – Munson's Prime

This is Kansas Profile. I'm Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University.

It's time to name the Grand Champion at the American Royal. And here it is! But this isn't the grand champion steer, it is the grand champion steak. The American Royal has wisely started to honor a top quality end product, in the form of a steak, as well as the traditional grand champion steer. The Grand Champion steak for 2013 is from the Munson Angus farm near Junction City, Kansas. The Munson family are high quality beef producers and innovators in marketing their product all the way to the consumer. It's today's Kansas Profile.

Deanna and Chuck Munson are owners of the Munson Angus farm and a new restaurant, Munson's Prime, in Junction City. Counting their grandchildren, there have been six generations of the Munson family in Geary County going back to the 1870s. In 1924, they started breeding Angus cattle for their superior meat production and quality.

Charles and Deanna and son David now operate some 200 Angus cows and 2,000 acres of pasture plus 3,000 acres of crop ground. Friends and neighbors started buying Munson beef directly from the farm and then the Munsons opened a retail outlet for fresh beef in Junction City. One constant through all the years had been the hearty meals prepared for family and farmworkers each day, and those could be marketed to others too. The Munsons discussed trying to get all their enterprises under one roof.

Meanwhile, a Munson steak was entered in the competition at the American Royal. The purpose of this competition is to identify the best tasting steak in America. The winner, based on a sensory lab and trained judges, was the steak from Munsons.

In January 2014, the Munsons bought a closed restaurant building located near I-70 in Junction City, gutted the entire building and started over. The result is a beautiful building with native stone, attractive wood, comfortable leather chairs up front, digital photo displays, and lots of seating.

The restaurant is called Munson's Prime. It includes a retail store plus a restaurant with hearty farm and ranch meals offered for lunch, plus a bar and grill and a steakhouse which is open Thursday through Sunday nights plus midday on weekends. It even has a drive thru.

Years before, Deanna Munson served on the Geary County Fair Board and volunteered to make homemade ice cream to sell at the fair as a fundraiser. "I made 65 gallons using borrowed freezers from all the neighbors and every sink in my house," Deanna said. It was a huge success, but it was so much work that Deanna vowed never to do it again.

At the state fair, Deanna saw a wagon carrying two ice cream freezers selling ice cream. The Munsons ended up buying an ice cream wagon like that which they then used at the county fair.

Then the Munsons saw a larger, stationary ice cream machine while visiting Silver Dollar City. It inspired them to put a similar machine in their new restaurant, Munson's Prime. Every piece of this new, ten foot tall ice cream machine was built by the Munson farm crew in their farm shop. It includes four five-gallon ice cream freezers set in attractive metalwork complete with pulleys turning belts. It's a whole lot easier

than making it by hand, but they still use the original recipe of Deanna's grandmother with locally grown Jersey milk.

In addition to Munson beef and homemade ice cream, the menu features as many other locally grown products as the Munsons can find. This supports local and rural growers. One man is raising an entire garden to supply Munson's Prime next year. Sweet corn, for example, comes from a farmer near the rural community of Tampa, population 112 people. Now, that's rural.

For more information, go to [www.munsonsprime.com](http://www.munsonsprime.com).

It's time to leave the American Royal, where a steak from Munsons was named Grand Champion. Now that beef is available through a retail store and restaurant in Junction City. We commend Deanna and Charles Munson and family for making a difference in their marketing of beef. I think the way they champion the beef industry is grand.

For the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, this is Ron Wilson with Kansas Profile.