

Teen's steer fetches record price at fair

Trey Flowers expected to get about \$6 a pound at auction for his red steer Spaghetti on Wednesday night at the Pensacola Interstate Fair.

The Atmore, Ala., teen had no idea the 970-pound steer he'd been raising since spring would fetch more than \$15,000 and set a fair record.

"It feels good to break the record," said Trey, 17, who plans to attend Auburn University at Montgomery in the fall to study business. He wants to become a literary agent.

Trey's father, John Flowers Sr., a farmer and loyal supporter of the livestock auctions at the fair, died Oct. 15.

John English placed the winning bid of \$16 a pound on behalf of Wind Creek Casino, a price that dwarfed the previous record of \$10.10. English said he "came ready to pay whatever it took" to buy Spaghetti, the fair's reserve grand champion.

English works at the Flowerses' Perdido River Farms.

Trey said he learned how to farm from his father and has been showing livestock since he was in middle school. Trey said he has about \$4,000 invested in the steer. After paying that back, he'll have more than \$11,000 in the bag for college.

Andy Peterson, livestock superintendent at the fair, said the unusually high bid was a thank-you for the elder Flowers' devotion to children.

"If a kid didn't have the money to buy a steer, John would give it to them," Peterson said. "And that came out of John's pocket. He knew cows. But more than that, he loved children."

In fact, it was because of Flowers that the last record was set, Peterson said.

"Two years ago, Katie Sullivan tied the record at \$10, and John got up the cash to push her over," he said. "It was her last year (showing steer), and he said, 'I'm going to give you that record.' "

Flowers' legacy lives on at the fair, as several pieces of equipment, from trimming chutes to blowers, came from his farm.

"That's why that record was that easy to get," Peterson said. "And Trey deserves it. He's a smart young man, he's never been in trouble, and the buyers wanted to support him."

Several supporters said Flowers would have been proud of his son.

"I know he's watching," Trey said.