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## Angus record breakers bid adieu in Witherswood sale

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John and Joan Woodruff will retire to Melbourne after running the Witherswood stud farm for 25 years.

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### Cattle stud

Larry Schlesinger

Renowned Angus cattle breeders John and Joan Woodruff have sold their Witherswood stud farm at the foot of the Warby Ranges in north-eastern Victoria, ending a stellar 25-year career in the beef sector.

The 509-hectare property at 1185 Glenrowan-Boweya Road in Taminick, west of Wangaratta, was acquired for almost \$5 million by nearby farmers Hamish and Michelle Sinclair.

The Sinclairs grow crops including wheat, canola, barley and faba (legumes) at nearby Bungeet West and will expand their operation at Witherswood to include sheep and cattle, Mr Woodruff said.

The Woodruffs made history in September 2015 as part of a consortium that paid a then record \$150,000 for an Australian Angus bull called Kingdom K35. (The record was surpassed in September when Millah Murrrah Parra-

trooper P15 sold at auction for \$160,000.)

Mr Woodruff said he was confident the new owners would continue the legacy of the Witherswood Angus stud and its history of producing some of the best breeding cattle in the country.

"They're a nice couple, part of the new farming generation and run a successful operation," he said.

"We loved what we did, but we're both in our 80s and it's time to pass on the property to new owners."

The couple, who will retire to Melbourne to spend more time with their family, developed some of the best Angus bloodlines in the country over almost three decades. They created the "Witherswood Method", based on superior genetics, which has been adopted by many other studs.

With no family to carry on the business, they last year made the difficult decision to offload their herd and properties in a three-stage process.

This began when they sold their female herd for more than \$2 million in

October last year, a very strong result given the drought conditions.

In March, they sold the stud's remaining 63 bulls including 18 sons of Kingdom K35 and three sired by Klooney, a bull for which the Woodruffs paid \$80,000, the fifth-highest price for an Australian Angus bull.

With the Woodruffs earlier having sold two smaller adjoining properties to neighbours, total property and stock sales total almost \$10 million.

Mr Woodruff called the sale of the stud "the final peg in the door" with just a sale of farm machinery to come.

He said the outlook for the beef industry was strong despite the drought, which he said was "part of life". His philosophy: "When you meet these challenges, they make you stronger."

The Witherswood sale was handled by Joe McKenzie and Hugh Amery of Landmark Harcourts. It included a main residence atop a hill, a second residence, selling arena, shedding, stables and yards, and a small vineyard planted to shiraz and cabernet.