



2003 NACC Underway

by **STEVE SUTHER**, *Director, Industry Information, Certified Angus Beef LLC*

Angus producers have a new opportunity to win recognition and prizes for the most valuable finished cattle in the country. The 2003 National Angus Carcass Challenge (NACC) opens exclusively at the 77 Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB)-licensed feedlots in January, according to initial corporate sponsors CAB and *Drovers*, a leading beef business journal.

Those who wish to enroll cattle for harvest any time in 2003 may contact their CAB partner feedlot about access to official NACC ear tags.

"The future belongs to beef producers who identify the most valuable genetics, manage them to realize their full potential and act on individual information to improve their focus," says Rod Schoenbine, CAB carcass data collection manager and NACC coordinator.

It will all come together under the NACC, which traces its roots to the Angus Value Discovery Project of the early 1990s, Schoenbine says. He acknowledges the contributions of the 2002 Best of the Breed (BoB) contest, too, but NACC is a unique program designed to fit CAB Supply Development goals and help Angus producers.

The contest is open to any producer who can assemble a set of 40 steers or heifers to feed in a CAB feedlot. Regardless of cow herd genetics, calves sired by registered Angus bulls are eligible, Schoenbine says. Registration numbers will be recorded on entry forms that are available from the feedlots.

In an effort to open the contest to wide participation, cattle may be harvested in any CAB-licensed packing plant throughout the 2003 calendar year. Prize packages will be awarded for the Top 10 high-value pens of steers and heifers, and for the Grand Champion NACC pen overall.

State Angus associations may participate with commingled test pens for smaller-scale producers. States with 1,000 head or more enrolled in NACC will be eligible for CAB prize packages that include sponsorships on their Angus tours or annual meetings.

The contest will aim to combine fun, education and profit, Schoenbine says. CAB Supply Development staff will coordinate the return of carcass data and contest grid values to all enrollees.

NACC winners will be determined by placing official U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) harvest data on a fixed-value contest grid. Complete details are available on the Web at www.cabfeedlots.com. Features include progressive yield grade (YG) and target weight premiums and discounts, an \$8

discount for Select off the Choice YG 3 base, a \$5 premium for *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) or a \$12 CAB Prime premium.

The fixed grid ensures uniformity across time and contestants, Schoenbine says. Winners will have the highest figure when gross dollars from the contest grid are divided by total pounds produced in the enrolled pen.

Actual pricing grids are available from the CAB-licensed packers to reward producers of on-target cattle. If your calves don't qualify to enter this year, he says, "consider using registered Angus bulls on future calf crops to open the door to real market rewards and contest opportunities."

Cattle enrollment will be tracked by state and herd of origin, and overall leaders will be posted at www.cabfeedlots.com as cattle are harvested, Schoenbine explains. "As we get into the year, we'll see many changes in the value leaders week to week." The site will update automatically as new information comes in from the plants.

Dollar amounts for prizes are not yet established, but the achievement may be the most valuable aspect of winning. Additional sponsors will support NACC 2003 with a combination of cash and in-kind prize packages. Specific prizes and dollar amounts will be announced as details become available.

All calves must be enrolled in CAB-licensed feedlots with the \$2 per head entry fee, and identified with individually numbered "National Angus Carcass Challenge" ear tags prior to harvest. NACC cattle will be accepted for harvest and data collection Mondays through Thursdays, Schoenbine says. Producers may combine ownership to achieve the minimum 40-head lot size, and there is no limit to the number of entries.

A maximum of two harvest dates (one shipping sort) will be allowed per entry pen, and 95% of each enrolled pen must be marketed to be eligible for prizes.

NACC 2003 offers industry recognition, along with the opportunity to forge working relationships with the most Angus-focused network of feedlots in the world, while preserving where the real market pays for high quality. To top it off, producers get individual carcass data feedback while participating in the competition.

"The first cattle can be harvested any time in 2003 after enrollment and tagging," Schoenbine says. As a practical matter, he suggests enrolling at reimplant stage in the feedlot. Harvest data will be accepted until Dec. 31, 2003, and the NACC 2003 winners will be announced at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver, Colo., in January 2004. Interested producers can contact Schoenbine at (330) 345-2333.



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