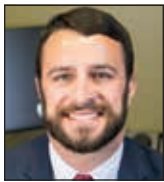


THE LINK

Separation from the ‘sea of sameness’

by Chris Engel, American Angus Association



During the past 20+ years, as an industry, we have improved significantly. The improvement can

be attributed to a variety of things, ranging from better management and utilization of resources to increased access to and use of improved genetics and new technologies.

At its core, however, I believe the improvement we have made as a whole is a testament to the dedication and commitment of the individuals within our industry — throughout all segments — to do a better job the next year than they did the year before.

One clear illustration of this improvement can be seen when you look at the consistent increase over time in the percentage of USDA Prime and USDA Choice quality grades (see Fig. 1).

Collectively, the cattle industry was able to respond to outside signals that called for us to improve our product — safe, wholesome, nutritious beef — and the way in which we produce it. It is safe to say that the common feeder cattle of today are far better than those of yesteryear.

Interestingly, during the same time frame, quality grades improved. The percentage of black-hided feeder cattle in the United States increased at a similar rate (see Fig. 2). To be clear, black was being thrown by more breeds than just Angus.

Telling the difference

Twenty years ago, a set of black-hided, weaned, uniformly conditioned steers sold through the sale ring was enough to indicate to

prospective buyers that they were quality cattle. More often than not, their black hides attracted a better price for the calves. Today, it is not that easy.

Cattle feeders are seeing a tremendous amount of variability in the postweaning performance of black-hided cattle in the feedlot. There is an extensive list of plausible explanations as to why, ranging from inclement weather events to different management practices on the ranch, at the feedlot and in between. Other contributing factors to the variation in feedlot performance of black-hided calves that cannot be overlooked are the differences in breed composition and the genetic merit of the calves’ sires and dams.

Simply put: Some calves have

what it takes; others don’t. This is applicable no matter the hide color. Simply selling 600 pounds of black calf doesn’t cut it anymore. Buyers need to have a higher degree of confidence in the calves’ ability to perform to be willing to pay more for them.

If you are producing above-average feeder calves — through the continual improvement of your cow herd, the purchase of good bulls, and investment in a sound health protocol and a complete nutrition program — it is important you do everything you can to make sure buyers are aware of the value you have added on (or preferably before) sale day. A great way to increase the likelihood of capturing the added value is by providing potential buyers additional

information to differentiate your calves from the “sea of sameness.”

Programmed assistance

Angus LinkSM was intentionally designed to provide commercial cattle producers who use registered Angus bulls and raise quality feeder calves a platform to communicate that quality to potential buyers and to track genetic progress of their calves over time.

The Marketing Certificate generated for enrolled groups of calves contains the Angus Link Scorecard, which consists of three simple scores (Beef Score, Feedlot Performance Score and Grid Score), and additional information describing the calves — from breed composition and health protocol to details about when and where they are selling (see Fig. 3, page 104).

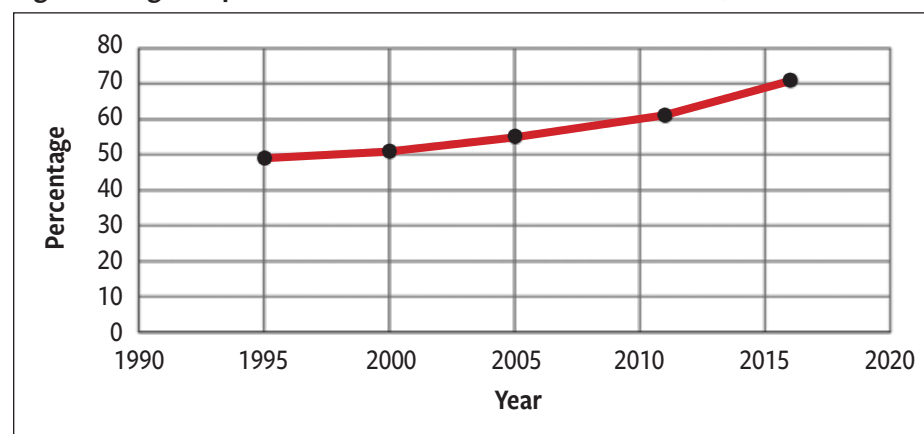
The Angus Link scores describe what is under the hide — the genetic performance potential of the group of enrolled calves. The scores provide cattle feeders, stocker operators, backgrounders and cattle buyers the ability to objectively assess the genetic merit of feeder calves using metrics that align with the traits most valuable to their business, specifically gain and grade.

Once producers have enrolled their calves in Angus Link, they will be able to tag the calves with the

program’s neon-green ear tags and provide their Marketing Certificate to the auction barn or video sale organization where they plan to sell their calves. In addition, producers can choose to make their marketing certificate public, at which time it is posted to the Angus Link website and sent in biweekly emails to cattle feeders and buyers across the country.

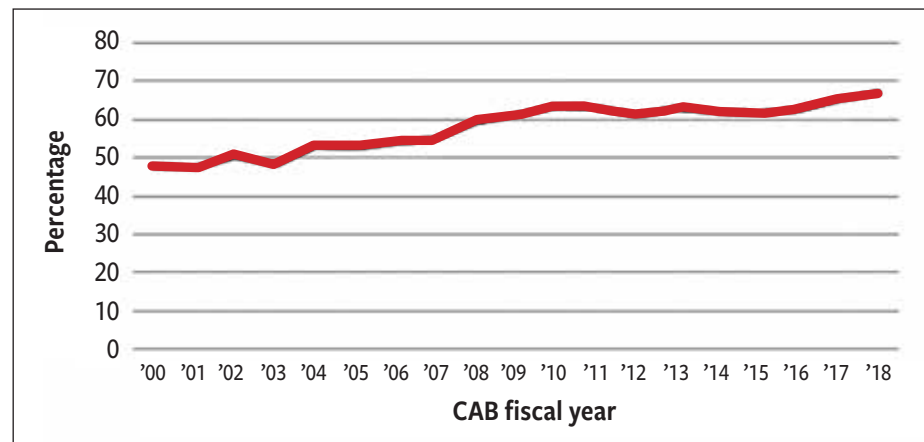
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Fig. 1: Changes in percent USDA Prime and Choice combined, over time



SOURCE: 2016 National Beef Quality Audit.

Fig. 2: Percentage of U.S. feeder cattle sold that are black-hided



SOURCE: USDA.

Fig. 3: Angus Link Marketing Certificate example

ANGUSLINK™
CATTLE GENETICS VERIFIED
CERTIFICATE OF ENROLLMENT

BEEF SCORE
127

FEEDLOT PERFORMANCE SCORE
118

GRID SCORE
136

HEALTH PROTOCOL

Actions	Product	Administered/ Expected Date
Birth	Alpha 7	01/2019-04/2019
Weaning	Vista 7 w/ Simmental, Vista Once	06/2019
Waxing	Vista 5, Selaginol, Dimes, P/O	06/2019

VERIFICATION PROGRAMS

ANGUS SOURCE
Age & Source

Other information: Good set of steer calves. Back ready and ready to go to work.

Date Issued: 5/5/18
ANGUS LINK CERTIFICATE ID: 023467

Chris Engel, Director of Angus Link

American Angus Association
3201 Frederick Ave. | Saint Joseph, MO
64506-816, 303-5100 | AngusLink.com

Page 1 of 1
Date: 1/5/18

SIRE ENROLLMENT GROUP
Angus Link Certificate ID: 145739

Angus Link
3201 Frederick Ave. | Saint Joseph, MO 64506
616.303.5100 | AngusLink.com

Sire Breeds: 100% Angus
Cow Herd Breed Composition: 100% Angus

ASSN	REG NUMBER	TAG	NAME	SERV TYPE	ASSN	REG NUMBER	TAG	NAME	SERV TYPE
AAA				AI	AAA				AI
AAA				AI	AAA				AI
AAA				AI	AAA				Owned
AAA				AI	AAA				AI
AAA				Owned	AAA				Owned
AAA				Owned	AAA				Owned
AAA				AI					

The information in this Certificate has been calculated based on data provided by the producer pursuant to the Angus Link program of the American Angus Association (the "Association"). The Association is not responsible for inaccurate information provided to it by the producer or others, intentionally identified cattle or inappropriate use of any information in this Certificate. Further, while the Association makes reasonable efforts to ensure the quality of the genetic prediction analysis and other information presented in its Angus Link program reports, the Association does not guarantee or assume responsibility for the accuracy, timeliness or completeness of information conveyed in such reports, which are predictions and not guarantees of any particular result.

SOURCE: American Angus Association Commercial Relations Department.

Have you ever sat in the crowd on sale day to watch your calves sell only to be disappointed in what they brought? Have you ever asked yourself, "Why did my neighbors get just as much as I did for their calves when they only put half as much into them?"

If you aren't raising average, commodity-type cattle, don't make the mistake of marketing them that way. Provide additional information to potential buyers to separate your calves from the "sea of sameness." Adding value to your calves isn't sustainable if you can't capture that

value and get a return on your investment come sale day.

Angus Link enrollment is done entirely online. Requirements for enrollment can be found on the program's website at www.anguslink.com.

Editor's note: The American Angus Association offers a host of programs to assist commercial cattlemen in profiting from their Angus genetics. The *Angus Beef Bulletin* will feature two columns to share insights about the programs. Chris Engel, director of Angus Link, will author "The Link." Ginette Gottswiller, director of AngusSource, will author "The Source."

Nichols Farms Private Treaty Bull Sale

Saturday - January 26 - Noon Lunch - Sale at 1:00 - 400 head to pick from

PB ANGUS PB SIMMENTAL PB SOUTH DEVON SX-1 Hybrid DX-1 Hybrid DAX-2 Composite



Large or small, we appreciate our customers/friends. And we will help you with your cross breeding plan. Plus we notify our network of feedlots when you sell your calves! Please join us for opening day of our yearling bull sale or give us a call.



*Nichols Upgrade B31 is a PB Simmental POWER BULL His Epds rank in the top 1% for Wean, Yearling, Maternal Wean wt, Carcass wt and top 4% \$TI.

*Nichols Final Answer Y34 is a Calving Ease Angus MEAT WAGON. His Epds rank in the top 5% for Wean, Yearling, Docility and \$ W.

* both pictured after pasture breeding cows

We keep your bull at no charge until you need them
Pay for your bull the day he's delivered to your place
\$100 off each and every bull, if you pick them up
We offer death and loss of use warranty

Bull Barn: 641-369 2829
Ross cell: 641-745-5241
Dave cell: 641-745-5730
Dave home: 712-762-3810



Good \$3500 Better \$4000 Best \$4500

Sale book: www.nicholsfarms.biz

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