

Matters of convenience



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lowan Otto Rohwedder in 1928 invented a machine to slice bread, but he had a hard time convincing potential buyers that anyone would want their bread sliced prior to purchase. It was Frank Bench, a baker in Chillicothe, Mo., who recognized the value of the convenience. He took a chance on the Rohwedder Bread Slicer, helped perfect the technology and started selling sliced bread. The rest is history.

Of course, customers did indeed favor their loaves sliced. “The greatest thing since sliced bread” still resonates, so you could say it established the benchmark for innovations.

Convenience on the ranch

To prepare for this issue focused on “Matters of Convenience,” last fall we asked you what convenience means to you in terms of cattle traits, management strategies and the tools that you use on your farm or ranch.

Topping the list of convenience traits were docility, structural soundness, calving ease, sound udders, mothering ability/maternal instincts, good feet, fertility in both bulls and females, early fertility, fleshing ability, a vigorous calf at birth, and disease and pest resistance. Mentioned less often, but still fitting, were the absence of twins, cows that get out and forage, cattle that are short-haired and easy-shedding, and cows that will call into a pen or lot.

Udder quality, soundness, a workable disposition and early fertility led Manhattan, Kan., producer Galen Fink’s list. “All these items save time, labor, money and headaches. ... This is basic stuff, but it is the start of the chain.”

We’ll share some more individual responses on our Facebook page as we unveil this edition online. Like our page and add your thoughts there.

Just how important are these traits? In past surveys and talking one-on-one with commercial customers about what they want in a herd sire, docility, calving ease and soundness typically surface as the Big 3. They lead the list in bull selection decisions. Other convenience traits are interspersed with performance and carcass traits and may vary by region.

While some would like to brand Angus as being single-trait focused on marbling (or is it calving ease or \$B or birth weight or yearling weight?), this issue documents that Angus breeders at home on the ranch and through their Association are focused on the traits that matter — all of them.

We hope you will enjoy this issue focused on matters of convenience and look forward to the February issue, which will focus on herd health.

Need a hat or a new pair of boots?

Information at your fingertips was not on your list of conveniences, but I’m hoping that’s because you take for granted it will be there in the *Angus Beef Bulletin* and the *Angus Beef Bulletin EXTRA*. Please help ensure that by filling out the survey polybagged with this issue. I know it’s long, but it’s not a chemistry exam; you know all the answers — and you’ll benefit from telling us.

Be sure to give us your response by the first week of February. We’ll have a drawing around

Valentine’s Day to select three survey respondents to receive some special items — a \$500 gift card to Greeley Hat Co., a \$500 gift card to Rios of Mercedes boot company, and a \$6,000 Angus Media marketing package. To save a stamp and a trip to the mailbox, fill the survey out

online at <http://bit.ly/ABBreadership>.

We try to think of every convenience. |



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