

Take those baby steps fearlessly.



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From the time we take our first steps, our most significant advancements occur because of necessity, whether real or perceived. We have to get to Mom, so we walk. We have to ask her for something, so we talk. We have to make the team, so we practice. We have to earn a living, so we go to school and/or learn a trade. We need grass, so we buy an acreage.

Without the incentive, we might not take those first steps. Giving a child everything before they ask can delay when they begin to speak, simply because they don't have to. Being satisfied creates a

complacency that can stymie an individual, an operation or an industry. While we strive for contentment with where we are, the world around us doesn't stop to let us enjoy the status quo very long.

Panelists at the first general session of the 2022 Angus Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, addressed the concept while discussing challenges and opportunities facing cattlemen today (see "Optimistic, Not Complacent" page 118). The challenges we face today in the cattle business can precipitate changes like they did decades ago. To quote Miranda Reiman's article:

Without the pressure of worsening beef demand and declining breed popularity, [panelist Matt] Perrier suggested, programs like the Angus Herd Inventory Records (AHIR®), open artificial insemination (AI) and the Certified Angus Beef® (CAB®) brand might not exist.

"That's what inspires ingenuity. We wouldn't be here today if we weren't suffering through the late '70s and '80s trying to sell Angus bulls," he said. "Let's face it, complacency does the exact opposite."

In a nutshell, the adversity faced in the 1970s and 1980s spurred the changes and the innovations that have propelled the breed — and the industry — to where it is today. The challenges we face today — high input costs, weather issues, increasing interest rates, consumer activism, government regulation, taxation, succession — can, in the same way, foster the innovation needed to take us to the next level.

Maybe that's a new management scenario. Maybe it's a marketing plan. Maybe it's a technology we haven't yet imagined, much less

Table 1: 'Where do you get your beef industry news and information?' responses by age demographic

| Age, years: | Total | ≤ 45 | 46-60 | ≥61 |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Print publications | 95.15 | 88.03 | 96.49 | 96.95 |
| Meetings & events | 41.45 | 38.73 | 43.86 | 40.85 |
| Websites | 36.07 | 53.52 | 39.77 | 29.11 |
| Industry affiliate | 29.21 | 35.21 | 25.73 | 28.64 |
| e-Newsletters | 28.13 | 33.10 | 25.15 | 27.93 |
| Television | 21.13 | 19.01 | 20.47 | 21.83 |
| Social media | 18.44 | 48.59 | 18.13 | 8.69 |
| Radio | 15.07 | 16.90 | 18.71 | 13.15 |
| Podcasts | 7.04 | 16.20 | 11.11 | 3.99 |

SOURCE: Angus Beef Bulletin Readership Survey, 2022. Note: Respondents could indicate multiple categories.

created. To every problem, there's a solution. We just have to take those first steps toward finding it.

Welcome to a redesign

We take pride in offering our content free to commercial cattlemen using registered Angus bulls and in keeping ad rates to a minimum to our advertisers. We are here to serve, and we don't want to add to what we know are increasing production costs.

Like you, we are facing increases in input costs. Paper and postage on our fall issues were up about 20%. That's not something we can sustain for the long haul. Like you, we hope there will be a correction in some of those input costs. Paper and transportation, for instance, like hay and diesel, we hope will see a correction and return to levels that would seem more realistic.

Other costs, like postage and labor, we know will likely continue to escalate.

So, we took steps toward a more sustainable bottom line. We made the choice to change the page size of the *Angus Beef Bulletin*, reducing two of our biggest costs — paper and postage — significantly. Some

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Conversion from pasteup to desktop publishing was one of many publishing advancements.



Mary became a pro with an X-acto® knife, a skill honed after hours at a pasteboard.



Artist Mary Black and Editor Shauna Hermel share a focus on the details.

PHOTO BY MEGAN SILVEIRA

of you are probably saying, “It’s about time; now it will stack better with the other magazines” — that is, if you can find other magazines. Many have gone to a digital-only format or gone away entirely.

You’ve told us the print publication is the way you prefer to receive information about the beef industry (see Table 1), a preference that held steady from our 2020 survey. We are committed to ensuring you can receive it that way — with the same content to help you make the management and marketing decisions to get the most of your investment in Angus genetics.

We will supplement the content of the print magazine with digital and social content to give you access to the content you need wherever you want to digest it. While that’s something we’ve been doing, the redesign will make a point of it and will help direct you to those “digital extras.”

Changing of the guard

The change in page size necessitated a redesign — and in a hurry. God doesn’t give us anything we can’t handle with His help. The timing for pulling off a redesign within 70 days to publication couldn’t have happened at a better time.

I have dreaded the day Mary Black would walk into my office and tell me she was ready to retire. About a year ago, it happened. Fortunately, she provided considerably more than two weeks’ notice.

A graphic artist here at Angus Media for 36 years, she helped teach me the ropes when I arrived on the scene 25 years ago. She’s been my go-to person since we started working together on the *Angus Journal*®. We’ve seen some major ups and downs — personal and professional. Through it all, she’s come to personify the fact you don’t have to be at the top



Leann Schleicher

of the company organizational chart to lead.

She’s been a mom away from home to countless interns and new hires, a counselor to co-workers in crisis and the rock to make it to the printer on time. I won’t say she’s done it without complaint, but she’s endured editor’s tweaks and brainstorm, done the research to make it happen and coached others to get the technical details right. She designs to catch the reader’s eye, but more importantly, she designs to help the reader understand without having to work at it.

Most importantly, we’ve helped each other lean on the Good Lord when we needed reminding.

Thank goodness, she’s just retiring. We’ll miss seeing her everyday, but we can’t wait to hear stories of what she, Aaron and Michael are up to.

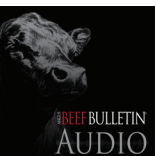
With her advance warning, we were able to search for her successor in time for her to train that candidate. And we actually found her from within. Leann Schleicher moved from our Print Services Department to editorial in July. We were fortunate to have both Leann and Mary to do the redesign.

Leann has a bachelor’s in fine arts from Missouri Western State University here in Saint Joseph and has worked at Angus Media since 2012. She’s an excellent photographer, and actually helped our editorial teams move to an InCopy-InDesign workflow in 2017. That’s a big deal to us.

She’s learned from the best for magazine design and has taken the lead on the redesign you see before you.

Lots of things make change hard, but there is a lot to which to look forward. Baby steps toward a new frontier. **ABB**

Read more about Mary Black — the life, the legend.



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