

THE LINK

Lessons from a mousetrap

by Ginette Gottswiller, American Angus Association



Grandpa heard a noise behind the couch. His grandson had his finger in the mousetrap.

“Owwww!” whimpered the grandson.

“Sonny, don’t put your finger in the mousetrap. It will bite you,” Grandpa advised.

The next day Grandpa couldn’t find his grandson. He looked behind the couch. There the grandson was, licking the peanut butter off the mousetrap.

That boy obviously was motivated to get the peanut butter. No matter how much or how little, he was going to figure out a way to get what he wanted.

That boy is a thinker. He isn’t going to wait for someone to feed him. I’ll bet he is one of those kids that really doesn’t care what someone thinks about him. He is driven, sees what he wants, and he is after it 100%, full-steam ahead.

The older he gets, the more pressure there will be on him to think like others. Think about your son or daughter when they were in high school. Most want to be part of “the crowd.” Some parents go to great lengths to help their kids be part of “the crowd.”

Different can pay

You know, the Angus breed wasn’t trying to be part of “the crowd” 40 years ago, and it worked out pretty well for the Association and its members.

When I started my career at the *Angus Journal* in the 1980s, there was this little program called Certified Angus Beef. The *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand was definitely not part of “the crowd” and went its own way looking for consistent, high-marbling carcasses. Today *Certified Angus Beef* is a household name because of the commitment of those who were like the peanut-butter-loving grandson. He didn’t give up and found a way to get that peanut butter.

Have you attended a cattlemen’s meeting lately? Who is speaking out with different ideas? How many in the crowd shake their head at those people and their ideas? New ideas are not always easy to adopt. Sometimes those new ideas just won’t work for your operation, but that doesn’t make them bad ideas.

Badges of distinction

AngusLinkSM was designed to be a simple way to provide marketing assistance for commercial cattlemen who raised Angus-influenced feeder calves. Those who love Angus

know that all black-hided calves are not created equal. Those producers who used good Angus genetics wanted a reward for their effort.

AngusLink has seen tremendous growth the last two years and has more options than ever to allow it to fit most producers’ management styles today. The verification business is pretty darn competitive, but AngusLink wants to stay true to its roots by emphasizing the value of outstanding Angus genetics.

If you don’t know about the Genetic Merit Scorecard® (GMS) that is offered through AngusLink, now may be the time to pick up the phone before you start selecting your Angus bulls this year. One piece of the score is the bulls used to sire the calf crop. Expected progeny differences (EPDs) and data are the cornerstone of the GMS. A balanced-trait bull is always a winner. Use the Current Sires Percentile Breakdown chart at www.angus.org to set a goal for your buying purchases.

In my opinion, the scorecard is an easy way to benchmark your calf crop and determine if you want to make improvements in your bull or female purchases. Calf buyers use it,

too. The other day I was chatting with a buyer, and he was asking several questions about the scorecard. I mentioned that several producers made the comment they didn’t know many buyers who knew what the scorecard was or how to use it.

He chuckled and replied, “Well now, do you really think they are going to tell that producer or, frankly, anyone else they know what it is? They are going to resist all day long saying that it’s a good deal, because it makes those calves more valuable. It is like a CarfaxTM. When you see the Carfax lists multiple repairs, or a vehicle has been wrecked, do you show that Carfax to the potential buyer? Heck, that producer will want more money for those good calves.”

Anybody want some peanut butter? |

Editor’s note: Ginette Gottswiller is the director of verification services for the American Angus Association. “The Link” is a regular column in the *Angus Beef Bulletin* and available monthly in the *EXTRA* under the Marketing tab at www.angusbeefbulletin.com/extra.

