

Spring projects



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Springtime comes to south Texas early. At least it's early compared to most of the rest of the country.

One of the early signs of spring when I was growing up was planting the family garden at the ranch. Like most places in the United States, it was planted in two phases. First, tradition held the weekend closest to Valentine's Day was for planting potatoes and other cool-weather vegetables, such as beets, onions, cabbage, cauliflower and broccoli. A few weeks later, in went the tomato and pepper seedlings, along with seeding squash and beans.

Calving season

Of course, it wasn't just planting the garden that let you know spring was just around the corner. It was also the arrival of newborn calves and,

ultimately, the greening of grass.

While spring may be a way off for most of us, the annual cycle of the cattle business has begun for those who spring-calve. It's checking on springing heifers in the middle of the night, babying newborn calves in the kitchen on bitterly cold nights and moving pairs out to pasture. It's a busy time, and it establishes the foundation for how the year is going to turn out.

Not too early

While it's critical to get calves on the ground and off to a good start, it's not too early to start thinking about marketing those calves come the end of the summer.

You want to make sure you're rewarded for the investment you've made in genetics in buying registered Angus bulls as the foundation of your herd. That's why you want to seriously consider using Angus LinkSM, the Association's new feeder-cattle program.

Angus Link brings the world's most comprehensive genetic database to your cow herd. The program's three simple scores identify your calf crop's genetic performance potential from ranch to feedlot. The program enables you to effectively communicate the genetic merit of your calves to potential buyers while giving you the information you need to make your calf crop better than the last.

Angus Link is specifically designed for you — cattlemen who use registered Angus bulls as the foundation of their breeding programs.

Angus Link allows you the opportunity to identify the potential genetic value of feeder cattle. The program is developed from the Association's dollar value (\$Value) indexes and provides three scores. The Beef Score indicates overall feeding performance and carcass value; the Feedlot Performance Score is based upon average daily gain and dry-matter intake; and the Grid Score is based upon marbling, fat and ribeye.

In order to qualify for Angus Link, at least 50% of a producer's bull battery must be registered Angus bulls, and no more than 25% can be non-registered bulls. In addition, you'll need to provide the number of females calving annually, along with a description of the breed composition of your cow herd. The predominant coat color of the calves is required, along with a basic vaccine management program requiring calves receive at least one round each of blackleg, viral and bacterial vaccines prior to shipping.

Finally, it's simple to enroll in Angus Link. Enrollments are done online, and fees for the program are extremely reasonable at \$4.50 per head with a minimum of 50 head — \$225.

It's never too early to start making plans for marketing this year's calf crop. Let Angus Link help you identify, and get rewarded for, the genetic potential of your feeder calves. You've invested in good Angus genetics. Make sure you're rewarded for that investment. To learn more about Angus Link, visit www.anguslink.org. |

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