

# GET THE NOD

Get the nod of approval from more potential buyers with objective measure of value.

by Troy Marshall, American Angus Association

**W**e all want confirmation that we are on the right track, or that our strategies make sense. One of the best methods to get that is what I call the coffee shop nod of approval. We see it all the time:

A group of cattlemen sits in a café, drinking coffee. One asks something like, “Where do you buy your bulls?” or “What mineral do you use?”

When you offer the answer, and everyone gives that subtle nod of approval, you know you are on the right track.

If a seedstock producer wants to know if his marketing program is

working, all he needs to do is see if the mention of their ranch name generates that nod of approval.

The concept of the coffee shop nod of approval encompasses several different themes — validation, word-of-mouth advertising and recognition in the marketplace. These are very important principles.

We want the marketplace to

agree and embrace our management and genetic programs. We want the respect of others and people who are willing to recommend our program on a personal level. The key to achieving success in the marketplace is to have name or brand recognition.

## **Selling on reputation**

Since we have not had an objective, reliable and cost-effective way of describing the differences in the genetic merit of a set of calves, the industry relied on the concept of reputation cattle. If two or more buyers knew the

management and genetics of a set of calves were above average, they would bid premiums into the market for that set of calves.

Selling on reputation is actually a great thing. As Jeff Bezos said, “A brand for a company is like a reputation for a person. You earn reputation by trying to do hard things well.”

The problem with selling cattle based on reputation is simply a math problem. Very few people know the reputation or performance of a set of calves because that is determined by firsthand experience of owning them. As the saying goes, it takes two to tango.

It takes two buyers to bid a premium into the cattle. So, you have to have multiple buyers who need your cattle at the same time and who know your cattle are

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superior, as well as to what degree they can expect your calves to exceed industry averages to receive a premium.

**More objective evaluation**

The AngusLink<sup>SM</sup> Genetic Merit Scorecard<sup>®</sup> is simply a more accurate and consistent way to sell cattle based on “reputation,” but it does it in a way to expose the information to the broadest of audiences.


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and substance make a reputation. Reputation makes customers.

The Genetic Merit Scorecard is a way of documenting what you have done, and is, in its simplest form, simply the coffee shop nod of approval. Instead of that nod being restricted to your local café, it is a nod of approval from the entire industry.

It is a simple concept. There is nothing magical about it. We all understand the basic truth that you can’t buy a reputation; you must earn it. The Genetic Merit Scorecard simply documents and validates that you have earned it, so you can be rewarded for it. |

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<b>Angus Link scorecard</b>	
<b>BEEF SCORE</b> <b>155</b>	
<b>FEEDLOT PERFORMANCE SCORE</b> <b>115</b>	<b>GRID SCORE</b> <b>125</b> 

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Editor’s note: Troy Marshall is the director of commercial industry relations for the American Angus Association.