

# THE LINK

## Everything is hard before it's easy

by Ginette Gottswiller, American Angus Association



The colts ran around the pen with one in the lead and another dragging tail. The 6666 Ranch brought some outstanding colts to choose from for this competition, which challenges equestrians to “build a partnership with an untrained 3-year-old American Quarter Horse across three intense days of competition.” I was able to sneak a day to watch the process and the eventual payoff for Wade Black at the 2021 Road to the Horse competition.

Black was the wild card winner in 2019. I was grateful when his aunt asked me if I had time to watch him compete. After his win, I asked him if there were any secrets he could share.

“Just don’t quit,” he said. “Everything is hard before it’s easy.”

That statement equally applies to enrolling in AngusLink<sup>SM</sup>.

Some producers think there should be a guaranteed premium for the time it takes to enroll. Face it, everyone doesn’t get a trophy or a premium. Yet every rancher who enrolls is following their passion to raise the best, well-cared-for calves that will produce the best U.S. beef on the dinner table. That is their reward, although generally there is a premium tagging along for their efforts.

Watching Black at the competition, it was evident he didn’t have any “quit” in him. He was laser-focused.

“Let the horse be a horse,” he advised.

I love that statement, because it comes down to trust. Trust the horse, respect the horse, and know that you will be able to guide the horse to being the best it can be.

Similarly, I would say, “Let a rancher be a rancher.” AngusLink knows ranchers are already doing the work and keeping the records it takes to be enrolled. AngusLink is simply the vehicle they can use to elevate their marketing to another level by using the various claims that fit their management. AngusLink gives ranchers options.



Above: The Road to the Horse competition challenged equestrians to partner with untrained 3-year-old colts from 6666 Ranch.

Left: Wade Black (left) with his dad, Martin.

It takes time to build a relationship with your horse. I doubt you trust that young colt much when you start in the round pen.

It isn’t much different when it comes to your one payday a year. Ranchers tell me marketing is one of the hardest things they have to do.

I can’t guarantee that you will top the market or that you are going to get a 200% return on your investment because you enrolled in AngusLink. I’m not going to ever tell you that will happen. Although, I am going to say you have to start somewhere when it comes to marketing. If you get bucked off, or you don’t get what you want out of the calves, that doesn’t mean it was a bad decision. Just don’t quit. Dust off and get back on. **I**

Editor’s note: Ginette Gottswiller is the director of verification services for the American Angus Association.