



Association Lead In

by **RICHARD SPADER**, executive vice president, American Angus Association

Expansion emphasizes need for Angus

Based upon a number of indicators, the national beef cow herd is starting to grow. The Cattle-Fax April 2001 cow-calf survey indicated that one-third of producers expanded their herds last year, and the trend is spreading. At this phase of the beef cattle cycle, it appears that only drought and other related issues will slow the expansion.

The effect of any buildup remains to be seen, but if other meat reports are accurate, we can anticipate a lot of product in the marketplace in the years ahead. That includes beef, pork and poultry. It won't come quickly, but it surely will happen.

Ramifications

This means that we have to work harder and smarter, paying close attention to the type of cattle we produce and the way those cattle are marketed. Cattle that perform for all segments of the industry and produce the most acceptable product for the consumer will be most in demand. Cattle that don't meet all those needs at a time of abundant beef production are destined for discounts as supply increases. Speakers at the National Angus Conference in recent years have made that same point.

It may be hard to accept when all beef cattle have relatively good value; but it will happen, as it always has in the past. It happens when beef supplies increase and all segments of the business can be

more selective of the cattle they buy.

Over the past three decades, the Angus breed has emphasized the production of cattle with superior traits as evaluated through Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR). Emphasis on carcass traits has been given high priority in recent years, including the emphasis the American Angus Association has placed on the use of ultrasound to speed the process. This year we will generate expected progeny differences (EPDs) for end product on 237,135 animals through the use of ultrasound.

Now and in the years ahead, more and more meaningful carcass information will become available for registered and commercial cattlemen. The Angus breed will lead the way in offering carcass genetics for the beef industry. Again, it is important that the cattle we propagate in a growth phase are the right kind — the kind that perform for producers and the kind consumers ultimately want to buy.

As we progress in 2001 and beyond, it is also important to note that demand for *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) products, coupled with the demand by packers for lean, high-quality carcasses, points to a growing role for Angus in all phases of the beef industry. At this point in the year, the five-year average Choice-Select spread reported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is about \$8/hundredweight (cwt.), which demonstrates the added value of any

Choice carcass, not to mention one that meets the specifications for the CAB brand or the Prime grade.

No accidents

As we start into beef herd expansion, it's important to remember that the signs point to a bigger role for Angus. It is also important to remember that Angus, with the genetics to produce cattle that meet industry needs, will be called upon to fill that role.

It is no accident that Angus cattle command top prices these days, and that trend will continue in the future. It's the result of hard work and foresight on the part of many Angus breeders, going back to the founders of our breed.

Furthermore, it will be no accident if Angus extends its dominance in this century. It will come as a result of the planning and the improvement in quality that Angus breeders implement today and in the years to follow.

On a related note, I hope you take the opportunity to join us in North Platte, Neb., Sept. 30-Oct. 3 for the National Angus Conference and Tour. The role of Angus in the beef industry will be a highlight of the three-day event, and the topics will cover a broad range of beef cattle and Angus issues. It's a trip worth taking. Look for more details on page 14.

