

THE LINK

'Marketing alert' button

by Ginette Gottswiller, American Angus Association



"I've fallen, and I can't get up" always makes me think of the Life Alert® commercial.

My son and I are always laughing about that when one of us takes a tumble.

In reality, a bad fall can cause some unexpected life changes. There are falls that teach us a lesson. Falls we don't see coming. Sometimes we make it down the slippery road one more time by God's grace. Those falls we don't see coming are sudden stops, and they hurt.

A stable plan

Wouldn't it be awesome if we could have a "marketing alert" button to push? It would gauge the

market, tell us the best time to sell, what calves to sell, when buyers are looking, the premiums for calves in value-added programs, and the list goes on.

These past few years have made me wish for the "marketing alert" button. The fire last August and the pandemic going on now have sure complicated decision-making, but most of those who had a marketing plan that included good Angus cattle, preconditioning and enrolling in value-added programs like AngusLinkSM have not been disappointed in how their calves are selling.

Think about a versatile three-legged stool that can be used just about anywhere. Its stability prevents falls. Think of the seat as your feeder-calf marketing plan

supported by each of these three legs: AngusLink (value-added program), quality Angus genetics and preconditioning.

Each of the legs is equal and needed to make the plan work. If you remove a leg, it makes it easier to fall over.

Three legs

Let's start with the AngusLink leg. Some producers don't utilize value-added programs. Take a moment to view the results of recent video sales. It is easy to sort the prices on their websites. It's clear calves enrolled in Non-Hormone Treated Cattle (NHTC); NHTC and NeverEver3; or NHTC, NeverEver3 and Global Animal Partnership (GAP) are commanding premiums from \$14 to \$18 per hundredweight (cwt.).

The next leg is Angus genetics. Marketing the genetic merit of your feeder-calf crop can come in many packages. AngusLink offers the Angus-Sired Genetic Process Verified Program (PVP) claim that means all the calves must be sired by registered and transferred Angus bulls. Some buyers look exclusively for this claim, while others take notice of our Genetic Merit Scorecard®. The Genetic Merit Scorecard uses a three-score system to give buyers an idea of how the group of enrolled calves will perform on the rail.

The final leg is preconditioning. At the end of the day, sick calves don't gain or grade. Buyers are keen to know what vaccinations your calves



have been given. Saying from the block they have had all their shots is like going to the grocery store to buy steaks without seeing them or having a quality grade listed. Again, you can easily see where calves that have documented

records command more on sale day. Also consider our AngusLink Calf Management claim.

Plans come in different shapes and sizes. They can be elaborate or bare-bones. I'm more of a fast-and-furious planner who shoots from the hip as I'm running to another job. Another person I work with is more of a spreadsheet, "Let's get it down and review it" kind of person. Make sure the numbers work, and put considerable effort into "the plan." Having a plan of some sort prevents those falls. While we can't have a "marketing alert" button, having a plan does make the whole process more successful.

The key is we both have a plan, and our plans work for each of us. I encourage you to make AngusLink and the suite of Process Verified Claims, as well as the Genetic Merit Scores, part of your marketing plan. Pick up the phone today and call 816-383-5100, and ask for Emily, Sarah or myself to make AngusLink a part of your plan. |

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