

THE LINK

Be ahead of the storm of change

Story & photos by Ginette Gottswiller, American Angus Association



Emotions ran high. The auctioneer's chant was strong, but occasionally his voice cracked.

This was the last time he would be on the block in this old sale barn. It was the last day anyone would sell cattle crossing these scales or see cattle walking down these alleys.

The St. Joseph Stockyards has been in decline for many years, but this was the final nail in the coffin. It was the last sale. Marketing cattle in northwest Missouri would be forever changed.

Change. It happens daily. Some changes are understandable, while others really don't make much sense. Change is happening at a much faster pace than ever before. It seems like I'm watching a video that is running at 10 times the speed it did just a few years ago.

There are reasons

Why did the St. Joseph Stockyards close? There's a laundry list of reasons:

- ▶ Many of the packing plants left Saint Joseph years ago.
- ▶ The city has grown around the area.
- ▶ Other businesses have prospered in the area and need room to expand.
- ▶ The hog market doesn't exist any longer; hogs are sold direct.
- ▶ The barn did not utilize any video or online buying options. Last year during COVID, that hurt.

The list goes on.

Consumers have changed. Markets have changed. Cattle genetics have changed. Change is inevitable. Growth is optional.

Answering to consumers

Some consumers have made a move to know more about the food

they purchase and consume. Was that steak they bought made right, bred right and fed right?

As a cattle producer, I am confident 99.9% of the steaks on the table raised by American farmers and ranchers are made right, bred right and fed right. There's a part of me that asks, "Do we really need a sticker to tell the person eating the steak we take good care of our cattle?"

Well, if consumers are asking, those who answer are likely to earn their consumers' loyalty.

Today's marketing provides more information, transparency and details supported by data to give the consumer more knowledge about the product, rather than just a pretty picture.

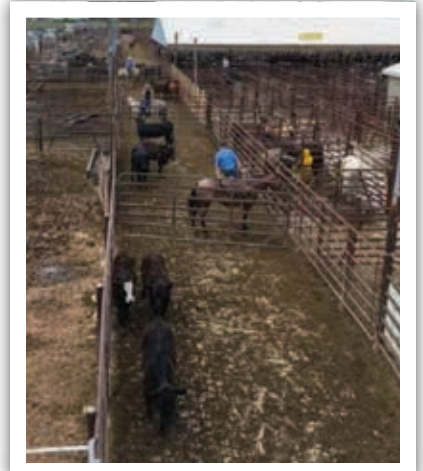
Process-verified

AngusLinkSM is a USDA Process Verified Program (PVP) that is used to market Angus-influenced feeder calves. Producers go through an enrollment process and provide information and documents to support the claims in which they choose to enroll to market their calves. Most producers are already keeping all the information they need.

One question I get repeatedly: How long does it take to enroll? That, my friend, is up to you! The phone training and enrollment can be completed in 20 minutes. Depending upon the claims, it is up to you to provide the information needed to complete the enrollment. The question really is: How fast can you email us the information?

It's time to grow the value-added marketing claims like AngusLink.

In the last couple of years, value-added program cattle have become more widely sought at auction. More marketing claims than ever are being used to entice consumers to buy beef.



Times are changing. Just like the St. Joseph Stockyards, producers will need to decide where they fit into this world of change. Are value-added programs like AngusLink an option for you?



During the last video sale I attended, it was evident there was a price divide on value-added program cattle vs. commodity cattle. There are still some fantastic reputation groups of calves that do not have any extra bells or whistles that bring a good price. However, it is easy to see the divide between those lots with the value-added badges.

Times are changing. Just like the St. Joseph Stockyards, producers will need to decide where they fit

into this world of change. Are value-added programs like AngusLink an option for you to market your feeder calves?

You can't always predict the storm, but you can prepare for what's coming. Call us today at 816-383-5100 to learn more about AngusLink. |

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