



The Angus Link

by **MATT PERRIER**, director of commercial relations, American Angus Association

Evaluate what's important now in the beef industry

My high school football coach painted three letters in our weight training room during the summer prior to my senior season — W.I.N.

The word they spelled was nothing new to a group of overly aggressive, highly enthusiastic pigskin players. We knew that — in small-town Kansas — the final tally on the gridiron scoreboard measured true success or failure every Friday night during the fall. But the periods after each letter had us stymied.

After a summer of waiting and wondering what these letters represented, our answer came at the first team meeting before those two-a-day practices began:

What's Important Now

W.I.N.

“To **win**,” our coach informed us, “we must take care of **What's Important Now.**”

Now, for a bunch of squeaky-voiced, clumsy ranch kids — some of whom had never crossed the state line — this was an absolute revelation. Although (to our senior English teacher's dismay) we could not grasp the “deeper meaning” of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, this word-turned-acronym made a lot of sense to our simple minds.

And it still should.

For the next six minutes, let's forget about the many controversial issues currently facing the beef industry. Leave discussions about packer control, checkoff programs and regulatory

entities for another article in another publication.

Instead, let's focus on what's important *now*.

More profit per animal

Many producers are staring at drought-stressed pastures, depleted hay resources and smaller herd numbers on their operations. Thanks to *El Niño*, *La Niña* or whatever forces we can blame the nation's current weather patterns on, many producers have been forced to significantly downsize their herds.

Even those who haven't had to cut numbers are being told that they must increase their herd size to compete with larger ranches that can market truckloads of cattle at numerous times throughout the year. With soaring land values, urban sprawl and labor issues, this goal is difficult — if not impossible — to attain.

Therefore, most in the beef business are faced with the challenge of producing more profit per animal.

What are some areas in your operation that offer sources of increased profit?

- Higher-valued replacement heifers (instead of discounted feeder heifers)?
- Steers retained through the stocker/yearling or feedlot phase?

Sure, it takes extra inputs to capitalize on these increased values,

but this might be a good year to take a hard look at some of these “nontraditional” methods of revenue generation. Good genetics and sound management practices are also key elements in achieving the objective of increased revenues per production unit. However, to truly differentiate a product in a market, verifiable information must go along with the product to prove its higher value. In the beef industry, that information can range from annual pregnancy percentages on marketed replacement females to individual carcass information on past years' fed steers.

When measuring revenues per animal, producers must look at more information than simply a price per pound or the amount of premiums garnered. They must look at costs and the potential benefits of making a change in the management, genetics or marketing of cattle.

This fall, many cow-calf producers have had to make the difficult decision between selling weaned calves or retaining ownership through the yearling or feeding phase. Major decisions like this one greatly emphasize the benefits that accurate information can offer when assessing marketing options.

Often, the driving force for many cow-calf producers deciding to retain ownership of their calves through the feedyard has been the information that they receive in return. Historically,

Online service

Looking for another option in marketing Angus-influenced commercial cattle? List your Angus-influenced commercial cattle online at www.AngusSource.com.

Formerly known as ARCNet, AngusSource is an Internet-based listing, accessible by feedyards, commercial producers and anyone searching for high-quality Angus genetics. Listings are also e-mailed on a weekly basis to hundreds of potential buyers.

Free of charge for buyers of registered Angus bulls, AngusSource offers one more option for your marketing efforts.

Market your Angus-influenced cattle to the world — visit www.AngusSource.com today.

owning the cattle “from womb to tomb” has given producers the best chance of receiving this important information. More options are becoming available, though, for producers interested in selling calves but still receiving feedlot and carcass data in return.

Carcass data is important

The Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) Feedlot-Licensing Program (FLP) works with feedyards nationwide, many of which will partner or purchase 100% of your cattle, and still strive to return the feedlot and carcass performance information on your cattle to you. This is still not a guarantee, but is an opportunity for producers wanting to work with someone who recognizes the value of this information. Contact the CAB Supply Development office at (785) 539-0123 to learn more about this program.



To further improve your chances of receiving carcass data back on your cattle sold at weaning, make your request before you sell your calves. By putting carcass data collection and feedback in the “terms of the trade,” feeders are made aware of your desire for information dissemination and can bid accordingly. While some yards are still not comfortable with the process, more feedlot operators are realizing the desire of cow-calf producers to improve the genetics in their herds, and they are working with these producers to pass this information along to them.

No matter what the decision, do yourself a favor. Record and utilize as

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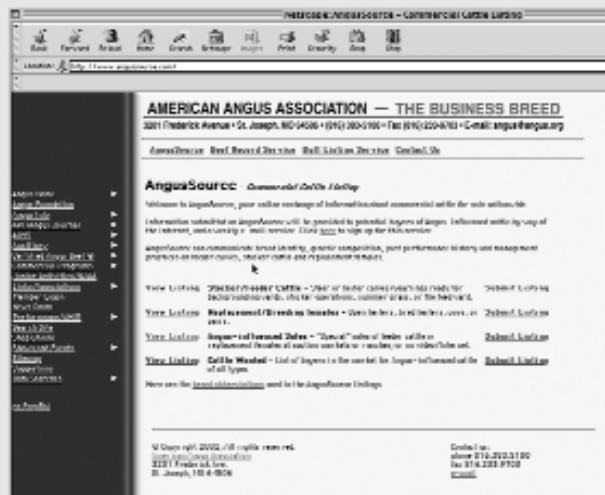
Association offers options to market Angus-influenced cattle

As an added option for marketing your commercial feeder cattle and replacement females, the American Angus Association has made several additions to its commercial marketing Web site. AngusSource (formerly known as ARCNet) can be accessed at www.AngusSource.com, and will offer another option to producers selling cattle at nearly any stage in the production cycle. In addition to the name change, several other additions have been made available, such as a weekly e-mail update to feedyards searching for sources of verifiable Angus genetics. Plus, other elements will be added, so check out AngusSource for another option in marketing your Angus-influenced commercial cattle.

When listing cattle on AngusSource, follow these suggestions to increase interest in your listed groups:

- List feeder cattle in “truckload lots” of 50,000 pounds. If necessary, coordinate with area producers to offer groups of cattle in this fashion. Due to transportation costs, feedyards generally disregard groups of cattle smaller than this standard industry figure.
- Complete *all* information that you know about the cattle, including registration numbers of the sires. This knowledge of genetics, in addition to the management information, will demonstrate your commitment to raising quality cattle.

- List cattle early. AngusSource listings are maintained for 90 days following submission. With no cost and no obligation, it makes sense to list calves or replacement females a month or more prior to delivery.



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much information on your herd as you can collect. Commercial data collection and participation in recordkeeping programs such as the Angus Beef Record Service (BRS) and source-verified marketing programs like AngusSource used to be “what the future held.”

Today, they have become *what's important now.*

Plus, check out continued enhancements to Angus BRS, the Standardized Performance Analysis (SPA)-certified, commercial recordkeeping program that offers



source- and genetic-verification on your cow herd. Information is available online at www.beefrecords.com, or by contacting the American Angus Association's Commercial Relations staff at (816) 383-5100.



**United States Postal Service
STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP,
MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION**

1. Publication title: **ANGUS BEEF BULLETIN**
2. Publication number: 1524-8488
3. Filing date: 10/01/02
4. Issue frequency: **Four times annually**
5. Number of issues published annually: 4
6. Annual subscription price: \$0
7. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: 3201 Frederick Ave., Saint Joseph, MO 64506-2997
8. Complete mailing address of headquarters or general business office of publisher: 3201 Frederick Ave., Saint Joseph, MO 64506-2997
9. Full names and complete mailing addresses of publisher, editor and managing editor: **Publisher—John R. Crouch; Editor—Shauna Rose Hermel; General Manager—Terry A. Cotton.** 3201 Frederick Ave., Saint Joseph, MO 64506-2997
10. Owner: **Angus Productions Inc., 3201 Frederick Ave., Saint Joseph, MO 64506-2997; American Angus Association, 3201 Frederick Ave., Saint Joseph, MO 64506-2997**
11. Known bondholders, mortgages and other security holders owning or holding 1% or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities: **None**
12. Tax status: **Not applicable**
13. Publication title: **ANGUS BEEF BULLETIN**
14. Issue date for circulation data below: **September 2002**
15. EXTENT AND NATURE OF CIRCULATION
 - a. Total number of copies: average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months = **68,100**; number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date=**61,968**
 - b. Paid/requested circulation. (1) Paid/requested outside-county mail subscriptions: average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months=**35,790**; number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date=**31,318**. (2) Paid in-county subscriptions: average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months=**0**; number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date=**0**. (3) Sales through dealers, carriers, street vendors, counter sales and other non-USPS paid distribution: average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months=**0**; number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date=**0**. (4) Other classes mailed through the USPS: average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months=**0**; number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date=**0**
 - c. Total paid/requested circulation: average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months=**35,790**; number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date=**31,318**
 - d. Free distribution by mail. (1) Outside-county: average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months=**30,935**; number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date=**29,650**. (2) In-county: average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months=**0**; number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date=**0**. (3) Other classes mailed through the USPS: average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months=**0**; number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date=**0**
 - e. Free distribution outside the mail: average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months=**0**; number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date=**0**
 - f. Total free distribution: average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months=**30,935**; number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date=**29,650**
 - g. Total distribution: average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months=**66,725**; number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date=**60,968**
 - h. Copies not distributed: average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months=**1,375**; number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date=**1,000**
 - i. Total: average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months=**68,100**; number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date=**61,968**
 - j. Percent paid/requested circulation: average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months=**54%**; number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date=**51%**
16. Publication of statement of ownership: **Publication required. Will be printed in the October issue of this publication.**
17. Signature and title of editor, publisher, business manager or owner: **Richard E. Wilson, Business Manager, 9/18/02**