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Angus in the Southeast

Angus enthusiasts gather in Orlando, Fla., for some fun, tours, education and networking in the Sunshine state.

by Peyton Schmitt, American Angus Association

For the first time ever, the American Angus Association headed to the Southeast — to Orlando, Fla. — for its annual convention Nov. 3-6. The event attracted more than 1,100 registrants and featured an expansive trade show.



“It’s so great to get the Angus family back together,” said Mark McCully, Association CEO. “Innovation starts with people, and people who come to this conference are people who are innovators in the business. Our hope is that we provided relevant and meaningful insights to our members, all while enjoying Angus fellowship.”

Each day offered a variety of opportunities for attendees to gain knowledge and catch up with friends. Many took advantage of tours offered, including the National Angus Tour to Deseret Ranch and Kempfer Cattle Co., Beef Blitz hosted by Certified Angus Beef (CAB), and Kennedy Space Center. The weekend officially commenced on Friday evening with the trade show grand opening and welcome

reception, featuring *Certified Angus Beef*[®] brand *hors d’oeuvres* and lively conversation.

General sessions

The main stage hosted three general sessions designed to inform attendees on the latest changes in the industry. At the opening session, “Innovation: Start with the End in Mind,” attendees heard from McCully and John Stika, CAB president, looking together from the seedstock producer to the retailer, and how innovations at every level help drive demand.

“We’re here to create an economic pull that ultimately allows you as the

membership of the American Angus Association to get more for what you do, so that you can pass your farm or ranch on to the next generation and continue that legacy moving forward,” Stika said. “We will continue to innovate. We’ll continue to work, and we’ll continue to strive to deliver on this brand’s mission: to increase demand and value for your registered Angus cattle.”

General session two, sponsored by Neogen, highlighted innovations in genomics, featuring a trio of trailblazers in the genetic fields of beef cattle, aquaculture and human fertility: Kelli Retallick-Riley, president, Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI); Debbie Plouffe, vice president of business development with the Center for Aquaculture Technologies; and Kristin Brogaard, co-founder and chief strategy officer with Inherent Biosciences. These speakers defined the nuances of their current research, while also drawing similarities between each of their industries.



Angus breeders from across the country saw firsthand cattle production in the Southeast during the National Angus Tour to Deseret Ranches of Florida and Kempfer Cattle Co.

“If you find the traits that are both interesting for the consumers and the producers, that’s where you’re going to be most successful,” Plouffe said.

The third general session shared perspectives from the leaders of each Association entity. Kelli Retallick-Riley, AGI; Jaclyn Boester, Angus Foundation; Stika; and Clay Zwilling, Angus Media, joined McCully to discuss current and upcoming innovations happening at Angus.

“As breeders and leaders in this industry, we want to make sure as your organization we’re right there alongside — and at times helping maybe even find some new places to go — to continue to grow and be successful as a breed,” McCully said. “At the end of the day, this is about your success.”

Education

There was no shortage of educational opportunities in Orlando. The weekend featured “AAA Q&A” sessions, which allowed attendees to get their frequently asked questions answered by Association staff. Learning Lounges hosted by several trade show vendors discussed topics ranging from breeding to nutrition.

As part of the “Raised with Respect” campaign, CAB hosted a Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) training Nov. 4, which was attended by nearly 100 Angus breeders. This certification earned them an invitation to CAB’s BQA Bash that evening. At the bash, convention attendees with a BQA certification celebrated the hard work happening on their ranches and their dedication to building consumer trust.



Kelli Retallick-Riley, AGI; Debbie Plouffe, Center for Aquaculture Technologies; and Kristin Brogaard, Inherent Biosciences, shared innovations in genomics across three species during a main-stage presentation.

Angus University sessions catered to attendees’ interests throughout the event. The Capturing Value session included a panel of perspectives from the seedstock, feeder and marketing sectors on how commercial cattlemen can best claim their competitive edge in the marketplace and capture value on the investments they have made in registered Angus genetics.

“We definitely are data-driven, but we also try to be very tuned in to what our customers need from us and what we need to do to help facilitate them being profitable,” said Lydia Yon of Yon Family Farms, Ridge Spring, S.C., and one of the session’s panelists (see “Panelists Talk Capturing Value,” page 100).

Sunday’s Angus University workshops offered four tracks designed to target a variety of interests: the Angus Media Marketing Summit, Beef Industry Insights, Caring for Your Herd, and All Things Angus. Each track featured three sessions, allowing attendees to immerse themselves in one

topic, or attend a range of informational sessions.

Grand prize giveaways

The grand prize giveaways are always a source of excitement, and they offered the chance for three attendees to win big at Angus Convention.

Adam Sawyer, Bassett, Neb., took home the Priefert and Datamars complete cattle-handling system. The corral features a solid sweep with a straight, adjustable working alley, leading to a Priefert Model S04 Squeeze Chute. The setup is completed by a Tru-Test by Datamars complete weight and water management solution, electronic identification reader (eID) and WaterWell™ 2 automatic waterer.

Kenny Hinkle, Nevada, Mo., was the winner of the John Deere XUV835M Gator™, which features a three-person cockpit; power steering; 54 hp; 2,000-pound (lb.) towing capacity; 1,000-lb. cargo box capacity; and speeds up to 45 mph.

Marcia Bryant, Monkton, Md., won a Trans Ova Service Voucher, which helps cover one Genetic Preservation, an IVF cycle, and up to five fresh implants into Trans Ova or client recipients and more.

Awards

The Association’s Awards Dinner and Reception recognized numerous honorees for notable achievements within the breed. The Angus Heritage Foundation inducted:

- Phil and Ruth Abrahamson, Lanesboro, Minn.;

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Angus Heritage Foundation Inductees



Phil and Ruth Abrahamson (center) receive the Angus Heritage Award from 2023 Miss American Angus Kelsey Theis and American Angus Association CEO Mark McCully.



Sharon and Jerry Connealy (center) receive the Angus Heritage Award from Kelsey Theis and Mark McCully.



Darla and Ben Eggers (center) receive the Angus Heritage Award from Kelsey Theis and Mark McCully.



Dan Shike (center) accepts the Angus Heritage Award for the late Doug Parrett from Theis and McCully.

Century Award Winners



Georgia, Don and Cody Miller receive the Century Award for Miller Angus Farm, Estelline, S.D.



Debra, Mike and Jesse Sitz receive the Century Award for Mike Sitz Angus Ranch, Burwell, Neb.



Alex Williams, Staley Smith, Linda Carmichell, Bebe Reed, Betsey Gregg, Dottie and Trey Reed receive the Century Award for Williams Angus, Gray, Tenn.

► Jerry and Sharon Connealy, Whitman, Neb.;

► Ben and Darla Eggers, Mexico, Mo.; and
► the late Doug Parrett, Champaign, Ill.

Three operations were recognized for 100 years in the Angus breed with the Century Award:

- Miller Angus Farm, Estelline, S.D.;
- Mike Sitz Angus Ranch, Burwell, Neb.; and
- Williams Angus, Gray, Tenn.

Awarded the Roll of Victory (ROV) Show Heifer of the Year was Conley FRKG Queen Meg 1085, owned by Houston Ferree, Sullivan, Ind. Conley Ransom 1810, owned by Case Conley, Sulphur, Okla., was named the ROV Show Bull of the Year. The ROV Breeder of the Year was Express Ranches, Yukon, Okla.

The 2023 Sire of the Year, Deer Valley Growth Fund, owned by Deer Valley Farm, Fayetteville, Tenn., was recognized for 5,006 total progeny registrations in fiscal year 2023.

Two new awards were introduced this year. Anne Lampe, Scott City, Kan., was recognized as the inaugural Angus Ambassador of the Year recipient. John McCurry, Hutchinson, Kan., earned the first-ever Young Breeder of the Year award.

Recipients of the 2024 CAB Producer Awards were recognized. The Seedstock Commitment to Excellence Award recipient was Benoit Angus Ranch, Esbon, Kan.; the Ambassador Award recipient was Seldom Rest Farms, Niles, Mich.; and the Progressive Partner recipient was Dakota Angus of North Dakota.

Breeders supported the Angus Foundation



John McCurry of Burrton, Kan., was presented with the American Angus Association's inaugural Young Breeder Award. Pictured are (from left) Theis; Drew, Molly, Aubree, Mary, Melody and John McCurry; and McCully.



Lauren Wolter of Aviston, Ill., was crowned the 2024 Miss American Angus.

as it auctioned two, limited-edition silk scarves from the 150th Celebration Scarf collections. The auction featured Spring Edition Scarf #150 and Fall Edition Scarf #1. In total, the scarves raised \$13,400 to support the Angus Foundation's mission, thanks to generous buyers Curtis and the late Anne Long of Briarwood Angus Farm,

Butler, Mo., along with Circle M Farms LLC, Rockwall, Texas.

The evening concluded with the highly anticipated crowning of the 2024 Miss American Angus. Lauren Wolter, Aviston, Ill., will spend her term serving and supporting the Association at shows and events across the country.

Angus business

The 140th Annual Convention of Delegates on Nov. 6 capped off the event. Five members were re-elected to the Board of Directors for a second term. They are Mark Ahearn, Wills Point, Texas; Smitty Lamb, Tifton, Ga.; Charles Mogck, Olivet, S.D.; Darrell Stevenson, White Sulphur Springs, Mont.; and Jerry Theis, Leavenworth, Kan.

Elected officers are Barry Pollard, Enid, Okla., president and chairman of the Board; and Jonathan Perry, Fayetteville, Tenn., vice president and vice chairman of the Board. Jim Brinkley, Milan, Mo., will serve as the treasurer for the 2023-2024 term (see "Leadership Elected," page 116).

To hear more perspectives from Angus Convention, listen to *The Angus Conversation* podcast at www.theangusconversation.com. The 2024 Angus Convention will be Nov. 1-4 in Fort Worth, Texas.

For more news and information on this year's convention, visit www.angus.org. To view the 2023 Angus Annual Report and the Association's complete financial report, visit <https://bit.ly/AngusAR23>. **ABB**

Editor's note: Peyton Schmitt is a communications specialist for the American Angus Association.