

## Keeping the focus on commercial cattlemen's success.

by Troy Marshall, American Angus Association



Most cattlemen have a vested interest in the future of the cattle industry. With Angus

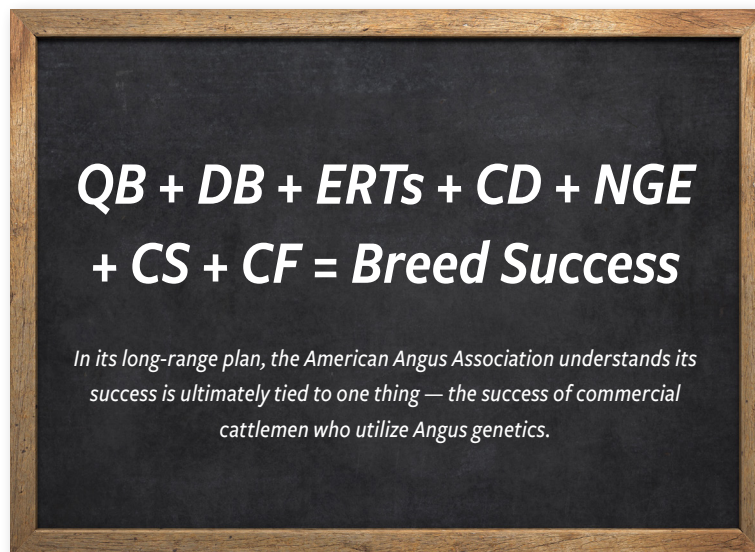
representing greater than 70% of the genetics in our industry, there is no escaping the correlation of success between the Angus breed and the cattle industry.

Angus has been responsible for creating the majority of progress the industry has seen from the standpoints of production efficiency and value creation.

Angus seedstock producers have played a key role in this regard. They not only created the largest genomic and phenotypic database in the world, but they continue to utilize technologies — genomics, ultrasound, embryo transfer (ET), artificial insemination (AI), expected progeny differences (EPDs) — at a rate that outdistances their competitors.

### Equation for success

As a result of embracing these technologies, data collection and the open sharing of data, they have been able to make incredible progress. If one were to create an equation for breed success, I would argue it would read like this: Quality of breeders + size of database + focus on economically relevant traits + focus on the consumer + strength of genetic evaluation tools (population size, selection pressure, selection tools) + common sense + commitment to the success of the



cow-calf industry = Breed Success

Or QB + DB + ERTs + CD + NGE + CS + CF = Breed Success

Angus inherently had the advantage of being recognized as the ultimate maternal breed. They were the undisputed leader from a calving ease and marbling perspective, advantages they have been able to maintain and increase over time.

The Certified Angus Beef (CAB) program became the largest branded-beef program in the world. During that time, it transformed the marketplace, helping to build a pricing system that began to reward quality and respond to consumer needs.

Perhaps just as importantly, it became the industry leader in both quality and sheer pounds. U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (USMARC) data confirm Angus is now the dominant breed in terms of rapid early growth.

Commercial cattlemen responded to these changes by increasing the Angus breed's

market share substantially during this time frame. Yet, we also know that unsurmountable advantages can fade over time. Success has the potential to build complacency. Association leadership has always understood that what gets you to the top of the mountain is rarely what will keep you there, which is why Angus continues to be the logical breed of choice going forward.

### Commercial focus

In its long-range plan, the American Angus Association understands its success is ultimately tied to one thing — the success of commercial cattlemen who utilize Angus genetics. The AngusLink<sup>SM</sup> program was created to help transform the way we market feeder cattle and reward cattlemen for their investment in superior genetics.

The Association is constantly investing in developing better and new tools to allow cattlemen

to make genetic progress faster while reducing the risk associated with such progress. The Association has never wavered on trying to create value at every level of our business — from seedstock to the consumer.

Of course, new opportunities and challenges constantly emerge — sustainability, whole-herd reporting, foot scores. Leaders within the Angus breed recognize complacency is the greatest threat the breed faces. They can never stand in the way of continual progress by saying some problem is unsolvable because of too much capital required, a lack of capability or capacity, concern that progress could disrupt the status quo, or that the problem is simply too difficult. They understand they are not victims of circumstances, but rather in control of their destiny with the ability to create a better future.

Angus has played a vital role in making the U.S. beef industry the most efficient in the world. The breed has increased beef demand and helped commercial cattlemen succeed. What excites me most is to be working with all the people using Angus genetics and their commitment to continually push the boundaries and be resilient in their dedication to transform this industry for the better. **ABB**

Editor's note: The American Angus Association offers a host of programs to assist commercial cattlemen in profiting from their Angus genetics. Authored by members of the Commercial Programs Department, "The Link" provides insight into those programs and services. Troy Marshall is director of commercial industry relations for the Association.