



The Angus Link

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Utilize Association programs during fall season

I remember my parents always lamenting when I was young about how time was flying by. "Where did the time go?" and "It seems like just yesterday" were frequent refrains at our house. At the time I couldn't understand what they were talking about. It seemed to me like we had all the time in the world. Well, guess what — now I understand. It is fall already, and I have no idea

how summer got by without me knowing it.

The only good thing about missing summer is that fall is my favorite time of the year. The warm days and cool evenings, the changing colors of the trees, the harvest — I like it.

Weaning is maybe the best part for cattlemen who spring-calve. Weaning calves is always an enjoyable event. It provides an objective measure of how your cow herd is doing and if your genetic decisions are heading your program in the direction you want to go. Besides, it is just plain fun to see those big healthy calves come through the

chute and to have the knowledge that your efforts are being rewarded. It makes you appreciate having the opportunity to be in animal agriculture.

Fall into BRS

We are enjoying good times in the beef business, and we deserve it.

However, it is a good time to get your cow herd in a position to continue to be profitable in the future.



The American Angus

Association has programs that are available to commercial cow-calf producers to help in that effort.

Commercial producers, through the Beef Record Service (BRS), can record performance data at all production levels on their cow herds and calf crops, regardless of breed composition. The program provides a unique opportunity for you to evaluate your commercial cattle productivity by tying to 45 years of performance data maintained by the Association.

Records are summarized to provide

adjusted measures and ratios; however, expected progeny differences (EPDs) are not generated on commercial cattle. Reports are generated by the Association to allow you to evaluate and compare the data, characterize your commercial cow herd, and work toward a higher-quality, more marketable product. Producers who use BRS appreciate the flexibility of the program. You can get as detailed as you desire or keep it as simple as you want.

Optimal tools

Another tool that commercial producers can use to help in making management decisions is the Angus Optimal Milk Module, available online at www.angus.org/tools/optmilk/index.html. Milk production has a significant effect on calf weights and, therefore, on calf crop revenue. However, lactation also requires lots of feed energy. The purpose of this interactive module is to help producers identify an optimal range of milk EPDs for their operation.

To make the best use of a tool like the Optimal Milk Module for selecting genetics to best fit your environment requires knowing your cows. How big is the average cow in your herd? Identifying differences in weight and body condition is essential when making those selection decisions. Producers can find more information regarding body condition score (BCS), along with mature size, on the Association Web site, www.angus.org and Angus Productions Inc.'s (API's) topic site, www.cowbcs.info.

Each year the Association sends commercial producers who have purchased an Angus bull in the last three years and had the registration paper properly transferred to them a list of the bulls in their ownership. This list gives the updated EPDs on their herd bull battery, which allows producers to evaluate genetic input in a concise, yet detailed, format. The EPD update and the *Sire Evaluation Report* are powerful tools in making herd sire selections that will complement your cow herd and allow you to move your operation in a positive direction. The *Sire Evaluation Report* is searchable online, or producers can request a printed copy from the Association.

Marketing advantage

In addition to these production tools, along with many others, the American Angus Association offers a tremendous marketing program, AngusSourceSM. AngusSource is a marketing and tagging program that lets producers verify source, group age and genetic information to potential customers. This information,

along with process and marketing data, gives potential buyers the information they need to make informed buying decisions and to feel comfortable in paying a premium for your Angus-sired feeder calves or replacement females.

The program is easy and economical to use. The first step to participate is to enroll. This may be done online at www.angussource.com, or you may request an enrollment form to be mailed or faxed to you. Once the enrollment form is on file, the rest of the program can be conducted online or by phone.

The second step in the program is to order tags. There are two options: a visual tag or a matched pair [radio frequency identification (RFID) button, plus the matching visual tag]. The visual tags are \$1 per tag, with a minimum order of 20 tags ordered in multiples of 10. The matched pair tags are \$3.25 per tag, with a minimum order of 25 ordered in singles. The tags will be printed with the state of origin, the producer's code and an in-herd management number up to five digits.

The requirements of the program are that the cattle in the program must be sired by a properly transferred, registered Angus bull; the group age of the set of cattle is entered by noting the date of birth of the oldest calf; and the tags must be ordered by the cattle's ranch of origin.

The last step is to create a marketing document to aid in the merchandising of your cattle. The information needed for this optional step includes breed makeup of the cow herd, weaning and backgrounding information, health/management procedures, sale date and location, and any additional comments.

The marketing document is either e-mailed to you or printed and mailed so you may distribute it to potential buyers. The marketing document will also be listed on the AngusSource Web site for up to 90 days prior to sale and will be e-mailed to more than 400 feedyards and buyers.

Yes, this is a busy time of year, and you have a lot going on. I know that it is difficult to get everything done that needs to be accomplished. However, by analyzing your cow herd and calf crop as you work them this fall and by using tools provided by the American Angus Association, you can go a long way in positioning your herd to be profitable in the future.

Oh, and don't forget to stop, look around and enjoy the beauty of the fall season. It's a great time of year, and time is flying by.