



ASSOCIATION LEAD IN

by **DICK SPADER**, executive director, American Angus Association

Filling the need is no accident

One of the biggest challenges in the beef business, or any business as far as that goes, is to fill the needs of customers. For well over a century Angus breeders have developed their breeding programs and worked hard to provide for the needs of their most important customer — commercial cattlemen. Those same commercial producers have provided cattle for the next segment of the industry, ultimately reaching consumers with the goal of a high-quality and consistent end product.

It's an interesting process, with each step from conception to consumer depending on each other and filling the needs, starting with the contribution of genetics to the beef chain.

Genetic effect

In recent years the industry has more fully realized the effect of genetics on its end product. In some ways genetics are also the problem in the industry, as we've mongrelized the nation's cow herd over the past three decades. This has contributed to inconsistency of the end product. Most segments today are accepting the fact that, while management plays a big part in improved beef products, the major area of improvement will come from wise breeding decisions.

In today's industry the partnership between segments is probably as effective as it has ever been, but there is still plenty to be done.

More than ever before, Angus breeders are striving to provide superior seedstock that will help commercial cattlemen improve the quality of their product and add to the profit line on their balance sheets.

Predictable

Angus breeders use the best information and the best technology available to fill your demand for seedstock backed by proven performance in the traits most important to you. The industry has come to depend on the American Angus Association for the most accurate, predictable genetic information available. The long-range plan of the Angus breed continues to drive home that objective.

The American Angus Association over the past decades has worked hard to serve the commercial beef cattle industry through numerous programs. We work closer than ever before with commercial producers in a number of areas. In April we staffed the new Commercial Relations Department, and efforts to achieve the Board of Directors' goal to improve relations with commercial producers are now in full swing. This is just one sign of the increasing cooperation between the American Angus Association members and commercial producers, and you in turn with feeders, packers and processors.

Opportunity knocks

It's a good time to be in the Angus business. We have a great opportunity to prepare for even better times that are to come in the next few years. There seems to be little doubt that carcass traits and carcass quality will be in strong demand, and this means that producers who identify cattle with superior marbling and lean yield genetics are going to have an advantage. Those genetics are in the Angus breed.

That doesn't mean that every other valuable trait of the Angus breed isn't important and shouldn't be seriously considered. It simply means that today we have numerous bulls available that can provide a balance of traits that will be most useful for the majority of cattle producers. In turn, there are numerous bulls that can improve the progeny of your cow herd in specific traits at a very rapid pace.

Along these lines, Angus breeders are serious about providing carcass traits along with calving ease, growth, feed efficiency, fleshing ability of females, disposition. ... The list goes on.

Already many of you have a good indication of the carcass-producing ability of

your cow herds. In the years ahead many more of you will retain ownership and collect carcass information. Many of the new alliances in the industry will move this system forward. As a result, seedstock producers will have to understand carcass evaluation and be able to help you make intelligent bull-buying decisions. Angus breeders are ready for that future.

Success is not accidental

It is no accident that the Angus breed is in the position it holds today. The world's largest database, sound breeding programs of producers, and end-product marketing programs such as the Certified Angus Beef (CAB) Program, are only a few of the many spokes in the wheel of success.

It will be no accident if Angus extends its dominance in the 21st century. It will come as a result of the planning and improvement of the Angus breed and the continued effort of Angus breeders to fill the needs of each segment in the industry.



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