



## Up Front

by **JOHN CROUCH**, executive vice president, American Angus Association

### What a year it was for Angus breeders

The American Angus Association experienced significant growth in all levels of business in 2006. A total of 347,572 registrations were included in the Association's herd book in fiscal year (FY) 2006, continuing an upward trend that has prevailed since 1986.

#### Business is up

Registrations rose by more than 7%, and transfers, at 206,121, also posted a 7% increase. Of the registrations processed, nearly 49% were the result of artificial insemination (AI) and 10% were embryo transfers (ET).

With a focus on genetic improvement, Angus breeders continue to submit performance measures at a record pace. A 6% increase in participation in the Beef Improvement Records (BIR) was observed as a total of 882,000 birth, weaning and yearling weights were added to the world's largest beef cattle performance database. Additionally, more than 150,000 ultrasound measurements were submitted, making for an 18.5% increase in body composition data.

AngusSource<sup>®</sup>, which earned status as an official U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Process Verified Program (PVP) this year, continues to experience growth, posting a 4% increase in enrollments this past year.

A record high of 13.1 million cattle were identified for the *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> (CAB<sup>®</sup>) program this year. A total of 543 million pounds (lb.) of high-quality Angus beef were marketed through the program, the highest since 2003.

#### Membership growth

The number of new regular members increased by more than 4%, with a total of 3,558 adults joining in FY 2006. If we had a conversation with them it would probably go as follows.

We, the new members who joined the American Angus Association in 2006, are a group of people with an interest in agriculture and a particular love for Angus cattle. We are thrilled to be considered members of the American Angus Association. This gives us the privilege of recording purebred Angus

animals in the Association herd book and further gives us access to the many Association programs designed to assist in our production and marketing efforts.

The majority of us chose registered Angus cattle as a result of observing pleasant experiences enjoyed by family, friends and neighbors. We were influenced toward the Angus breed because of the value of Angus cattle in the marketplace.

Most of us started with commercial cattle, and then switched to registered Angus, and about half of us were involved in 4-H, FFA or junior livestock programs of some kind. Our gender is predominantly male, and we are over 41 years of age ... but a substantial number of us were over 60 when we started.

Almost all of us finished high school and more than half finished college. A large portion of us have off-the-farm income of \$25,000 or more annually. Two-thirds of us derive less than 10% of our income from Angus cattle; 25% derive more than 10% but less than 50% of our income from our Angus operations.

We have computers, but most of us do not keep computerized herd records. We have access to the internet and e-mail.

From a marketing standpoint we utilize consignment sales and production sales; however, the majority of our cattle are sold through private treaty. We rely primarily on advice from family, friends and neighbors, as well as other seedstock producers. We also rely on and make use of Association services such as AAA Login, the Sire Evaluation Report, Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR<sup>SM</sup>), Association commercial programs, Angus Information Management Software (AIMS) and the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA).

Eighty percent of us currently own fewer than 20 Angus females, but have land resources to have more. In fact, almost 75% of us plan to own more than 20 cows in the next five years, and 18% plan to stock more than 50.

We are excited about the future and about our forthcoming involvement with this great breed and the progressive breeders who are fellow members of the American Angus Association. We are thankful that the Association and Angus breeders have had a banner year. As we enter the holiday season we wish our new Angus family the most joyous Christmas ever and the continuation of prosperity in 2007.

