



Up Front

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

The power of a transferred registration certificate

As we approach spring, we cautiously await the arrival of new calves. There's nothing quite like the anticipation one experiences in wondering what those calves will be like, and whether or not one will be satisfied come selling time with the selection decisions made last year.

Marketing vs. selling

The internationally famous business writer Peter Drucker said, "The aim of marketing is to make selling superfluous." The AngusSourceSM program does just that. Historically speaking, and I can say that with a certain degree of authority, commercial cattlemen have gathered their livestock in the fall or late spring and have sold their calf crop for whatever some buyer was willing to pay. That's selling — not marketing.

AngusSource is a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Process Verified

Program (PVP) for commercial cattle producers. It assures buyers of three things: It documents commercial cattle as being a minimum of 50% Angus-sired genetics, it sources them to the ranch of origin, and it provides group age. But, let's be more specific.

The requirements

From a genetic standpoint, the documentation includes the registration number and performance information on all of the Angus bulls used to sire the enrolled calves. The source must contain contact information for the calves' ranch of origin. All cattle enrolled together will have a group age of the oldest calf in the group.

Producers can customize the AngusSource Document for feeder cattle or replacement females by including the production information of the cow herd; health and vaccination information; past feedyard and carcass

information; and information regarding location, date and type of marketing planned. If customized, this information is sent via e-mail to more than 400 feedyards and order buyers interested in AngusSource cattle.

Producers can enroll in AngusSource by phone or by written submission of required information and records. Tag options include a full-size visual tag with customized in-herd management numbers, or a radio frequency identification (RFID) matched pair that includes both a visual tag and an electronic tag.

Critical questions

Is the program for everyone? No. It is just for those commercial Angus affiliates who can document the genetics, origin and group age of their cattle.

Is it worth the hassle? Yes. Buyers seek out cattle with this documentation and, in most cases, are willing to pay top dollar for them.

What are the hang-ups? First, the calves have to be born on your farm or ranch. There must be proof as to where they originated. Second, there must be proof as to the age of the oldest calf in the group. This requires a copy of the calving records that document the first calf's birth date. Third, these calves must be sired by registered Angus bulls and documented as such. That simply means the bulls must be properly transferred into the commercial producer's name. If leased bulls are used, the producer must have a copy of the lease agreement, and calves produced by artificial insemination (AI) must be documented by semen purchase receipts.

Share the Angus wealth

Many times, registered breeders have been reluctant to transfer bulls to commercial producers and, in the past, these buyers were not concerned with having the papers transferred. That scenario no longer exists.

At the onset of AngusSource's acceptance as a USDA PVP, we were concerned about the requirements for commercial producers; however, we have been absolutely overwhelmed by commercial producers' response and interest in the program.

Many producers would like to enroll

their calves, but they have an unnecessary obstacle. They keep accurate records, and their calves meet the program requirements, but their bulls are not transferred into their names. In fact, as I pen this article it is mid-December, and I'm looking at a list of 17 producers who were not able to enroll their calves in AngusSource due to the unwillingness of their seedstock supplier to execute bull transfers.

In this regard, I have a couple of recommendations:

- If you are a seedstock supplier and truly wish to provide service to your customers, make sure the cattle you sell are properly transferred.
- If you are a commercial producer, make sure you have an agreement with your seedstock supplier to properly transfer the cattle you purchase prior to making the purchase.

Is there value in a registration paper? Absolutely. First and foremost, the registration paper is the only guarantee a buyer has that the animal is indeed 100% Angus genetics and has documented parentage with the American Angus Association. A properly transferred registration paper does several things: It gives new owners access to the AngusSource program; it entitles them to receive updated expected progeny differences (EPDs) for their bulls on an annual basis; and it gives them a free three-year subscription to the *Angus Beef Bulletin*. Without the certificate, a bull is a bull is a bull.

