



# Up Front

by **JOHN CROUCH**, chief executive officer, American Angus Association

## New Year's resolutions

We always approach the New Year with excitement and anxiously anticipate changes for the better in our lives and life plans. In most cases, New Year's resolutions are short-lived and improvements are slow to come, which reminds me of words attributed to Albert Einstein: "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over, expecting different results."

### Team players

Sometimes I think this can be applied to the cattle business. We live in a rapidly evolving world. World population increases in the human race as well as other species have given way to increased demands on our resources. Energy for travel, manufacturing and life maintenance comes at a premium, and costs will continue to increase.

So, should we despair? Not by a long shot. The strength and power of the free world hinges on our ability to answer challenges that threaten our livelihood, our liberty and our pursuit of happiness.

In times of national stress we have stood united and strong. And unity is the cement that holds democracy together.

This Saint Joseph, Mo., correspondent — and many others involved in this beef industry we all love so dearly — are weary of the lack of team spirit that seems to permeate our very existence. It seems as though each segment of the beef industry is oftentimes at odds with other segments. If we are to prevail, this has to stop. At the end of the day, we all are striving for the same thing: to provide the consuming public with a nutritious, healthful, good-tasting product in a cost-efficient manner.

Each segment of production agriculture likes to think it functions independently. In reality, each is totally dependent on the other. This is especially true in the beef industry. It therefore seems so counterproductive to argue about and campaign for or against minor issues when much more significant, far-reaching policy

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is being considered and debated by our leaders.

### Burning daylight

For the past half century and longer, America has been the leader of the world in the production of high-quality beef. For the past 29 years the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand has successfully set the bar for public awareness of the differences in beef quality.

I am reminded of a quote from Churchill's *History of the English-Speaking Peoples* relative to Caesar's thoughts after he withdrew his army from Germany and started marching westward: *In the summer of the Roman year 699, now described as the year 55 before the birth of Christ, the Proconsul of Gaul, Gaius Julius Caesar, turned his gaze upon Britain.*

A current parallel to this observation is simply that there are countries with vast grasslands and abundant natural resources that are gazing at and lusting for the domestic and export markets we have labored to establish. We were made painfully aware of enormous financial suffering at the loss of our foreign markets in 2003 due to the discovery of a single case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in our country. Every precaution must be exercised to prevent a recurrence of this situation in the future, as once a market is lost it is not easily regained.

There can be no doubt that the key to our future is leadership from visionaries who see beyond tomorrow. The dominant role Angus occupies in the beef cattle economy does not come without a price. Let's move past partisanship, individualism and protectionist attitudes and unite in a common bond to engage all segments of the beef industry in cooperative production and marketing efforts.

If we don't do this, then who will? And if not now, when? We're burning daylight.

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