



The Angus Link

by **JIM SHIRLEY**, *director of commercial programs and vice president of industry relations, American Angus Association*

Extra effort makes the difference:

Enrollment in the AngusSourceSM program yields marketing success.

When I was in college, I had the opportunity to work for one of the greatest stockmen ever — Alex McKenzie. He was the shepherd at Oklahoma State University. Alex was a very quiet man and, as far as I know, never raised his voice to anyone. But, he could talk less and say more than any man I have ever met. All he had to do was look at me and I knew exactly what he was thinking.

I would do almost anything to please him, not because he was rich, powerful and/or famous, or because he had won a lot of awards, but because he was a fine gentleman who helped me understand what was truly important.

The way you live your life is how people will remember you. If you want to be respected by your fellow man, you need to earn it. Alex gained his reputation by giving more than was required. He came to work earlier, stayed later and worked harder than anyone. He never complained, and he expected no

less from those of us who worked for him.

I was thinking about him when I sat down to write this article. I know if you want to be successful (like Alex) in today's beef business, you need to do more than is required. I think it is important to understand that we are in the beef business — your genetics, your management and your practices affect you, but they also affect the rest of the links in the production chain.

If we want those people to continue to be in the business and be your customers in the future, then they have to be profitable. Like it or not, your success is dependent upon their success. The American Angus Association developed the AngusSourceSM program to help you and your customers be more successful today and in the future in this ever-changing beef business.

The Association's Commercial Programs Department started AngusSource in fall 2003 as a marketing

program that would differentiate Angus-sired cattle from other "black-hided" cattle. At the same time, the program would add value to these cattle by conveying important source, genetic, group age and process information to potential buyers.

We are pleased to report that the AngusSource program is now a Process Verified Program (PVP) through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), documenting a minimum of 50% Angus-sired genetics, as well as source and group age.

Keys to qualify

To be eligible for enrollment in AngusSource, cattle must meet the following requirements:

- **Genetics.** Cattle must be sired by a registered Angus bull.
- **Source.** Cattle must be enrolled by the ranch of origin.
- **Group age.** Cattle must have a known group age of month, day and year, which is determined by the birth date of the oldest calf in the group.

The producer must maintain pertinent records for a minimum of three years.

Steps to enroll

To enroll in the program, producers must complete the AngusSource Producer Participant Enrollment and Agreement forms. Producers may download these forms from www.angussource.com or request them by calling (816) 383-5100. Once these forms are completed, they must be mailed or faxed to the Association.

AngusSource staff will review the enrollment forms to assess the producer's eligibility to enroll cattle in the program. Producers who qualify may then complete training and begin the enrollment process.

Producers enrolling calves in the AngusSource program must do so by contacting AngusSource via phone. Training is completed over the phone, and enrollment information is recorded. Producers must submit copies of any records requested by AngusSource staff. This may include a copy of birth records of the oldest calf and copies of lease agreements and/or semen receipts. Once acceptable records have been received by AngusSource, the enrollment will be processed.

Tag options

Cattle enrolled in the program are identified with an AngusSource tag. There are two tag options available — the AngusSource visual program tag and

the radio frequency identification (RFID) matched pair, which includes a visual program tag and an RFID tag.

The AngusSource visual program tag is custom-printed with the calves' state of origin, lot number, AngusSource logo and herd management code designated by the producer. Once the enrollment is processed, the tags will be delivered directly to the ranch of origin in seven to 10 business days.

AngusSource documents

The source, genetic and group age information for each set of enrolled calves is documented on the AngusSource Document. This document is linked to the group lot number printed on the AngusSource tag. The group lot number consists of the state code, the two-digit code and the herd location code printed directly above the management code.

Producers may customize the document for feeder cattle or replacement females by adding additional management, process and sale information. If a sale date is included, this customized document is e-mailed to more than 400 potential buyers and is activated on the AngusSource Web site for up to 90 days prior to the sale date.

AngusSource documents may be accessed online by the producer who enrolled the cattle and may be printed to present to potential buyers. Buyers may request the document by contacting the Association if one is not provided at the time of purchase.

Producer reviews

The AngusSource staff is dedicated to maintaining the integrity of the program. Annually, a minimum of 10% of the producers who enroll cattle in the program will be selected for an on-site review. AngusSource staff will schedule an on-site visit with the producer and will review their management and recordkeeping practices that are relevant to the AngusSource program.

I know this process seems like it might take a lot of time and work, but it is really quite easy if you keep a minimal amount of records. I can assure you that the staff of the AngusSource program will work with you to make the process as simple and easy as possible.

It may require that you do a little more than is required to sell calves in today's market. But, if you, like Alex McKenzie, believe that doing more than is required is worth the effort, then contact us and see if the AngusSource program will work for you.

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