



# The Front Gate

by **ALLEN MOCZYGEMBA**, CEO, American Angus Association

## Strategic planning

In last month's column, I wrote about areas of growth for the American Angus Association. Specifically, I mentioned that it's key that we continue to ensure that opportunities exist for our members to continue to expand while driving demand for Angus cattle by finding ways to grow market share and market relevance.

### Plan for relevance

I believe that market relevance drives, and ultimately grows market share. In fact, I don't believe that long-term growth can occur in a market without providing a product that's relevant. To ensure that we continue to grow in relevance with both commercial cattlemen and consumers, it's imperative that we continue to approach our mission in a strategic and disciplined manner.

In 2011, the Association unveiled its Long-Range Strategic Plan. Based upon input from more than 800 Association members along with insight provided by focus groups from key market segments — seedstock, commercial cow-calf

producers and cattle feeders — the plan focused on driving demand for Angus cattle while establishing specific initiatives in the areas of: reproduction and inventory-based reporting; beef education in the retail and foodservice sectors; enhanced communications and marketing programs; and development of DNA technology.

By all measures, the 2011 plan was a resounding success in achieving its objectives. There was the launch of MaternalPlus®, the grand opening of the Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) Education & Culinary Center, the expansion of Angus TV, and the introduction of new low-density genomic tests. The success of all of these initiatives helped Angus grow its market relevance and market share.

### Constant effort

Yet, as I've said before, we cannot rest on our laurels. While the 2011 plan ultimately provided great guidance to ensure that the Association met its strategic objectives, it's time to renew

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that effort with an updated Long-Range Strategic Plan for the Association. As before, we'll gather input from our members, while also gathering information from the various sectors of the industry.

While crafting a long-term plan requires a significant investment of time and effort, a useful plan provides a disciplined and strategic approach for identifying and ultimately achieving our goals. Simply put, the plan creates

a road map for the future that will allow us to identify key areas for growth and development.

While the long-range plan is updated every five years, I plan to continue to leverage the key sectors of the industry — leading commercial cow-calf and fed-cattle producers — on an annual basis by creating advisory boards that will provide insight into their needs and expectations for the leading beef breed association. At the end of the day, it's critical we continue to increase our relevance in the marketplace to ensure demand for Angus cattle remains strong.

### First-quarter success

Finally, the first quarter of our fiscal year got off to a good start. Registrations were up approximately 2% for the quarter while birth, weaning and yearling weights were up more than 6%. This is not necessarily surprising as cattlemen embark on rebuilding herds in the growth phase of the cattle cycle.



## AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION®

3201 Frederick Ave., Saint Joseph, MO 64506-2997; phone: 816-383-5100; fax: 816-233-9703;  
Office hours: (M-F) 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Central) • email: [angus@angus.org](mailto:angus@angus.org)  
home page: [www.angus.org](http://www.angus.org) • [facebook.com/americanangusassociation](https://www.facebook.com/americanangusassociation) • [twitter: @AngusAssoc](https://twitter.com/AngusAssoc)

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**Industry appointments — CAB Board**, **Dwight 'Kip' Palmer**, Palmer Food Services, 900 Jefferson Rd., Rochester, NY 14623; office: 585-424-3210; [kpalmer@palmerfoods.com](mailto:kpalmer@palmerfoods.com) • **AGI Board liaison**, **Dr. Larry Kuehn**, U.S. Meat Animal Research Center, P.O. Box 166, Clay Center, NE 68933; office: 402-762-4352; [larry.kuehn@ars.usda.gov](mailto:larry.kuehn@ars.usda.gov) • **Foundation Board**, **Mark Duffell**, PO Box 504, Aldie, VA 20105; cell: 703-930-1841; [whitestonefarm@earthlink.net](mailto:whitestonefarm@earthlink.net)

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