



# Movin' Forward

by **BRYCE SCHUMANN**, chief executive officer, American Angus Association

## Connections

The long-range strategic planning process reminds us all of our connections to each other.

### Balance

One of the great things about the long-range planning process that the Association has undertaken during the last three months is the reminder of how all of us ultimately share in this extended Angus community.

The lesson is that the work that each of us does on a daily basis — whether it's here in Saint Joseph, Mo., or at a ranch or farm in an isolated location — has an impact on everyone else. And in this way, we are interdependent on each other. Our success, in many ways, depends on the collective actions of many.

Indeed, I was reminded of this reality at our February Board of Directors meeting in which we invited a panel of Association members and a panel of commercial producers to share their ideas on how this organization can continue to be a relevant economic and social force in rural America.

A message to come from the nearly

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800 surveys we've received and from the three industry panels we've conducted is that there needs to be balance between a focus on Angus people and the Angus breed. On the one hand, we need to do everything we can to make Angus cattle more consistent, higher in quality and more productive. On the other, we need to be diligent in providing Angus breeders with the tools they need to make better and more informed decisions and to improve their marketing practices.

### Great things can happen

When these two things converge, great things can happen. And this is no better illustrated than in the story of W.A. McHenry, whose biography is being

written by Steven Burress and Ardyce O'Neill of Logan, Iowa.

McHenry's life reads like a novel. Born in 1841 in New York, McHenry became the fourth generation of his Scotch-Irish family to serve in the military. He fought for the Army of the Potomac and lived through seven of 10 major Civil War battles, including Gettysburg and Antietam. His horse was shot out from under him twice.

He was among the soldiers who tracked down John Wilkes Booth, Lincoln's infamous assassin, then guarded the President's body as the funeral train processed back to Illinois.

He settled in Denison, Iowa, with a meager \$300 dollars and managed to become a hugely successful banker and Iowa businessman.

And, he raised what many consider the most influential sire in the Angus breed — Earl Marshall.

Today, Earl Marshall figures into the pedigree of some 15 million Angus in the United States out of a possible 16 million records at the Association. Perhaps even more astonishingly, of the 3.1 million Angus cattle registered in the last 10 years, all but 964 head trace back to him.

As the board approaches the writing of the Association long-range plan this summer, we have become ever-more mindful of the impact that individual breeders — and their breeding programs — can have on the future of our industry.

Our job, as it was a century ago when W.A. McHenry bred Earl Marshall, is to help pave the way to success for our members, and to balance the needs of both breeders and breed, ensuring our contribution is sustainable and far-reaching.

The McHenry story was featured in the February "I Am Angus" program. The segment can be seen on the videos page of [www.angus.org](http://www.angus.org).



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