



# Movin' Forward

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

## Programs for unprecedented times

Today is an exciting time to be in the Angus business. The nation's cow herd is poised for expansion as farmers and ranchers across the country shake their heads in pleased disbelief at cattle prices once unimaginable.

### Positive demand indicators

Amidst the boon, more and more cattlemen are recognizing the benefits of using registered Angus genetics and raising quality beef for an expanding consumer palate. At press time, bull sale averages were exceptional, and many breeders were reporting record-breaking sales.

Fiscal year figures through January show sale bulls averaging \$4,086 — that's 20.6% above this time last year and 41.9% higher than 2010. Cow numbers are nearly as positive, with an average sale price of \$3,185 — a 21.6% boost compared to 2010.

A three-year analysis shows cow values increasing an average of 11% per year from 2010 to 2012, and bull averages at more than 19% per year.

Now, that's demand.

Factor in the world's growing middle class and, therefore, a global appetite for Angus beef — specifically, *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) — and you'll see opportunities in 2012 for those Angus cattlemen willing to seize them.

### Programs to capitalize

The American Angus Association and its entities have developed several new programs and services during the past several months to help breeders and their customers do just that.

**MaternalPlus** is a voluntary, inventory-based reporting system designed to capture additional reproductive trait data and to ultimately expand reproductive and lifetime productivity tools, such as longevity measures. The new program allows breeders to more effectively capture reproductive trait data while providing participants with additional information at weaning processing time.

For our commercial customers, **GeneMax**™ offers a DNA test that

focuses on gain and grade potential. Developed by Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB), Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI) and Pfizer Animal Genetics, GeneMax is a simple and affordable test that can be used for profitable selection, marketing and management decisions in high-percentage Angus genetics sired by registered Angus bulls.

This service not only adds value to commercial females sired by Angus bulls, but it allows feedyard managers to realize the added value of high-percentage Angus feeder cattle.

Programs such as these will help Angus breeders keep Angus at the forefront of the beef cattle business.

### Do what we do best

Certainly, it's not getting any easier to raise cattle in today's environment. Input costs are at all-time highs and last

year's weather conditions forced the liquidation or relocation of much of the nation's cow herd.

At the Cattle Industry Annual

Convention and NCBA Trade Show in Nashville, Tenn., I heard much discussion about regulatory and policy challenges as well as increasing

sociopolitical pressures from well-funded anti-agriculture groups.

While our generation may have our work cut out for us, we've also never seen opportunities — or markets — like these. Let's take hold of these unprecedented times and do what we do best: Raise the world's best quality beef.

**ANGUS**  
THE BUSINESS BREED