



# Movin' Forward

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

## Beef cattle inventory challenges ahead

The Angus breed has a substantial effect on the genetic makeup of the U.S. beef cattle industry, which means the trends and financial health of the U.S. beef cattle business also greatly affect the Angus business.

### Survey says ...

A recent demographic survey by your American Angus Association revealed that the Angus breed dominates the genetic makeup of our affiliates' herds, comprising 68% of those herds' genetics. The second most popular breed as identified by the same survey made up 6% of those herds' genetics.

A recent bull survey by the *Western Livestock Journal* indicates that 74% of respondents are using Angus bulls. Both surveys document the strength and popularity of Angus genetics in the beef cattle business.

However, these encouraging surveys are somewhat dampened by the July 1, 2008, U.S. Department of Agriculture

(USDA) Beef Cow Inventory. This report indicated that the beef cow inventory was down 1% at 33.2 million head, and pegged the beef replacement heifer inventory at 4.6 million, down 2%.

These shrinking beef cow numbers are a direct response to the increased costs everyone in our business is experiencing. At the June Association Board of Directors meeting, Randy Blach of Cattle-Fax indicated that the loss of beef cow numbers from 1996 to 2007 means that the beef industry needs approximately 77,000 fewer bulls than it did a decade ago. In the same decade, Angus registrations have increased from 220,586 in 1996 to 347,755 in 2007.

It is clear that in the last decade Angus genetics have gained a larger and larger share of the nation's cow herd. It should also be clear that now is not the time to rest on the accomplishments of the last 10 years.

Shrinking cow numbers mean greater competition for market share. As the beef

cattle operation increases in size, the age of the owners also increases. Fifty-four percent of the affiliates surveyed by the Association were 55 years of age or older. As affiliate members of this organization, you help fuel the breed's effect on the industry and create a bright future we can enjoy because of the value Angus genetics create in the marketplace.

Now is the time to aggressively communicate to our customers — both present and future — these values and the conveniences that Angus genetics provide.

### Improving efficiency electronically

In a time of increasing costs, everyone looks for ways to become more efficient. One way to become more efficient is to reduce "transportation" costs. In the Association business, most of the costs incurred in transportation are mail costs. Electronic storage of your registration certificates improves your and the Association's efficiency by reducing these

costs. Certificates stored electronically can be transferred electronically, saving mail costs and streamlining your paperwork.

If your certificate is stored electronically, it can be corrected without the bother of returning the printed original. If it is stored electronically, it cannot be lost, so you never have to incur the cost of requesting a duplicate certificate.

In our current fiscal year, 64,839 new registrations, or 20.8%, have been stored electronically. In the same time frame, 50,604, or 25.5%, of transfers were processed electronically.

If you would like to convert your printed certificates to electronic storage, they are converted free of charge. Services such as electronic storage provide for savings in paper, postage and processing for you and the Association. Please consider making the switch.



## AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION®

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For Board member contact information, visit [www.angus.org/board.htm](http://www.angus.org/board.htm)

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President: Nancy Thelen, Saline, Mich. For a complete list of officers, visit [www.angusauxiliary.com](http://www.angusauxiliary.com).

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