

# The Source

by **GINETTE KURTZ**, *American Angus Association*

## Giving calves a designer label

“From field to fork” has taken on a new meaning in Australia. McDonald’s has introduced an iPhone app that allows consumers to know where their fish file, chicken nuggets or hamburger patty originated.

American consumers are no different. They want to know who raised the steer they have on their plate for dinner tonight and where it came from. Was it John Osborn or Pete Mitts from Missouri? How about Kent Dalmont from Oklahoma? These producers and many more like them use AngusSource® to verify the source and age of their calf crop and which Angus sires were used to produce the steak on that plate.

Why do they do it? Because they care. They want buyers to know they care about using the best Angus genetics to produce calves that gain and grade. They want consumers to know they care about producing safe, top-quality Angus beef for them.

AngusSource producers want consumers to have the best possible eating experience. They are proud to put their name on each and every calf that leaves their ranch, just like an artist who

signs a painting or a sculpture. They are proud of their product. Each calf enrolled in AngusSource carries a program-compliant tag that has a lot code printed on the tag that is tied to the producer.

These producers want to improve their genetics by using the selection tools and data that the American Angus Association makes available to the seedstock producer and the commercial cattleman. There is a mobile app to keep your calving records at your fingertips in the field. There are research articles and panel discussions on *The Angus Report* about crossbreeding vs. straightbreeding. Most valuable of all is the wealth of information packed into the expected progeny difference (EPD) database at the American Angus Association.

It doesn’t matter if you are a seedstock producer, commercial cowman or a feedlot buyer, EPDs can give you a glimpse of how the calves may perform by checking the Angus sires’ EPDs and accuracies. Remember, this is just a small snapshot of how they may perform, since you are only looking at the sire’s EPD information.

### AngusSource resources

When a producer enrolls in AngusSource, we don’t document if the dam is a registered-Angus female or even if she is Angus. You are only viewing 50% of the calves’ genetic makeup. Don’t forget, EPDs do not predict actual performance. They are used to describe the genetic differences between animals in the Angus breed.

Let’s “meet” two AngusSource producers and see why they feel AngusSource is an important part of their management program.

Ryan Latendresse, Towner, N.D., has been using AngusSource since 2009. He purchases calves from local producers who are also enrolled in source-verification programs. He feels the verification gives him a marketing edge over calves that are not verified. He backgrounds the purchased calves along with his calves so he has a larger group on sale day. Ryan says he will continue to enroll in AngusSource because he feels it is a must. Buyers can get an idea of his breeding program via the AngusSource marketing document that lists what registered-

Angus bulls he used to sire his calf crop.

“More and more people want to know where their food comes from,” Ryan says. He feels that source verification will continue to be in demand.

Further to the west, John Riley from Volberg, Mont., has seen success by utilizing AngusSource as a part of his marketing program. John has been enrolling since 2007 and says he feels the genetic verification is what really interests buyers. He lists vaccinations given to the calves and is able to convey health practices and other information along with the sires’ EPDs on the AngusSource marketing document. John feels it is important to let buyers know he is proud of the calves he produces.

Every producer I have talked with this past week uses AngusSource to show buyers they have used high-quality Angus genetics to produce their calves. They work with their seedstock producer to identify bulls with EPDs that will improve the genetic make up of their herd.

**Editor’s Note:** *Ginette Kurtz is quality manager of AngusSource for the American Angus Association.*