

The Source: Busting myths and misconceptions

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Growing up, my dad was always inventing some story to tell guests visiting our dairy barn. When his eyes would start to twinkle, watch out. After he washed off his cows, he would walk behind each cow that hadn't been milked and start pumping her tail.

The visitor would always ask, "So why do you do that to their tails after you wash them?"

Dad would reply, "'Cause you have to prime them so they will give more milk."

Some people would start laughing, but every once in a while someone would take the bait — hook, line and sinker. Dad would keep up the charade for a while, then finally quit pumping tails so they could figure it out on their own.

Once in a while someone would ask, "Do the brown cows give chocolate milk?" We had a couple of Brown Swiss, so it was easy to show them brown cows don't give chocolate milk. The myth was busted!

AngusSource® myths

Myth: Calves enrolled in AngusSource only receive premiums if they are sold through a video auction.

The statistical data we release regarding realized premiums is derived from calves selling on video markets. That's because price data is more readily available, and there are several producers selling in minimum load lots, which makes it easier to compare prices for age-verified vs. non-age-verified calves. But that doesn't mean that a load lot of calves selling at the sale barn won't bring in just as many dollars. It just means sale barn data isn't as accessible to us, and sometimes there may not be any other age-verified calves selling to which to compare that day.

For example, consider the following data collected from producers who enrolled calves in AngusSource. They reported receiving premiums regardless of how their calves were marketed. Producers indicated there was no difference if calves were sold in the sale barn, from the ranch of origin or on video. Producers who enroll their calves in AngusSource and Gateway can return a customer feedback form after each enrollment.

Here are the results. At the end of 2011 we had received 61 feedback forms. Approximately 62% of the AngusSource calves were sold at an auction market, 30% were sold on a video, and 8% were sold directly from the ranch of origin. Producers reported

receiving a premium 73% of the time their enrolled calves sold. Producers who sold 40 or more calves at a time were more likely to receive premiums than producers who sold fewer than 20 head. According to the data, calves enrolled in AngusSource have the potential to receive premiums regardless of the method of sale.

The misconception that calves enrolled in AngusSource only receive premiums if they are sold through a video auction is busted!

Myth: You just can't keep an ear tag in a calf in the country we run.

That's another misconception we have heard. Last year we issued just 64 replacement tags. That is less than 0.03% tag loss for 365 days. Plus, 80% of the producers who returned their customer feedback forms marked retention was excellent, and another 15% said it was good. Using that as an excuse not to enroll your calves is busted!

Reasons to enroll

Why should you enroll your calves in a top-rated age-verification program like AngusSource or Gateway?

- Customer service from the AngusSource department was superior,

according to 100% of the producers who returned customer feedback forms.

- Online marketing support for your calves works. Emails are sent out to more than 550 buyers who have signed up to receive information on when and where enrolled calves are selling.
- AngusSource Unofficial Verification Certificate is available online and lists the registered Angus bulls and dollar values (\$V) of the bulls used to sire the enrolled calf crop.
- One of the most cost-efficient age-verification programs available.

Find your calving records, print off the enrollment form at www.angussource.com, and fax us the copies. After you finish your chores, grab a cup of coffee and give us a call. You can be the next producer who sees the positive results of enrolling your calves in AngusSource or Gateway — and that isn't a misconception!



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