

The Source **Answering common questions**

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For spring-calving operations, if you don't already have calves on the ground, most likely you expect them any day now. That means, in addition to your regular daily workload, you may be checking cows, taking weights, tagging and a host of other activities. In the long laundry list

of things to do, thoughts of marketing may be low on the priority list. Hopefully this article brings it front and center.

There are things happening now that will affect your marketing options when it comes time to sell. This month I am focusing on answering the questions we get

asked most often. If, after reading this, you still have questions, please feel free to give us a call at 816-383-5100. We look forward to working with you in the coming year and wish you warm weather and healthy calves!

A general understanding of the AngusSource® program and age and source verification (ASV) is assumed for the purposes of this Q&A. If you are unfamiliar with AngusSource, please visit www.angussource.com or call our office for more information.

Q. Will I get paid more when I sell my calves?

A. We might as well tackle this one first. It is the most commonly asked question, and understandably so. We know you are looking for ways to get more for your calves, and it is logical that you would ask this question before investing your time and money in enrolling your calves in an ASV program.

Unfortunately, this can't be answered with a simple yes or no. The bottom line is enrolling your calves in an ASV program opens the door to additional marketing avenues. Enrollment documents important information about your calves and, through the online listing site, exposes your calves to more than 600 potential buyers.

Video auction data from the fall of 2010 showed that more than 50% of the calves marketed were enrolled in an ASV program. Those calves brought \$1.67 per hundredweight (cwt.) more than non-verified calves. If the calves were enrolled in the AngusSource program, they brought \$2.58 per cwt. more than calves that weren't enrolled in an ASV program.

Q. I only use Angus bulls and most of them are registered. Do I qualify for AngusSource?

A. To qualify for AngusSource all calves must be sired by registered, properly transferred Angus bulls. If you have commercial bulls on your operation, their calves are ineligible for AngusSource, but you have a few options.

No. 1 — If you have several breeding pastures and keep track of what cows were exposed to what bulls, it is possible to qualify a portion of your calf crop for AngusSource. At calving time you must either calve the cows that were only exposed to registered Angus bulls separately, or you must tag all your calves at birth to the dam. If you have records that show what bull each cow was exposed to, we can use those records to break your calves into two enrollment groups. The calves out of the cows only exposed to registered Angus bulls can qualify for AngusSource. Calves out of cows that were exposed to commercial Angus bulls (or bulls of any other breed) can be enrolled in Gateway. You will need to have an on-site review prior to enrollment, so make sure you plan ahead.

No. 2 — If you are unable to tell what cows were exposed to what bulls, you can enroll all of the calves in Gateway. Gateway does not have a genetic requirement — so, as long as the calves

meet the source and age requirements, the entire calf crop can be enrolled in Gateway. No on-site review is necessary if you choose this option.

Q. What is Gateway?

A. Gateway is a second-tier enrollment option of the AngusSource Process Verified Program (PVP). While AngusSource verifies source, age and Angus genetics (sired by registered Angus bull), Gateway verifies source and age with no genetic requirement.

The enrollment fee for Gateway is \$50 per group (same as AngusSource). If an onsite review is required for a Gateway enrollment there is a \$150 fee plus applicable travel costs. Program-compliant tags (PCT) for Gateway are yellow and prices are as follows: visual PCT, \$2.00; e. Tag RFID PCT, \$3.00; ChoiceSet PCT, \$5.00. (AngusSource PCT costs are visual PCT, \$1.00; e. Tag RFID PCT, \$2.25; ChoiceSet PCT, \$3.25.)

Producers enrolling in Gateway receive the same outstanding customer service and have access to the same Online Listing Site used by producers enrolled in AngusSource.

Q. What is the Online Listing Site?

A. The Online Listing Site is a free marketing tool available to producers with calves enrolled in AngusSource or Gateway. Producers may customize their Verification Certificate by adding management, health and marketing information up to 90 days prior to the sale date. This information is then formatted into a concise marketing document and posted online for potential buyers to see. Weekly e-mails are sent to more than 600 individuals notifying them of new listings, and a Sunday e-mail highlights those calves selling the following week.

Producers may market their calves however they choose. Direct from the ranch, through their local auction market, or through a video sale, whatever the producer decides, the Online Listing Site will help spread the word of when and where those calves are available for sale.

Q. When should I enroll my calves?

A. Calves must be enrolled and tagged prior to leaving the ranch of origin. We recommend enrolling the calves at the end of calving season and prior to weaning/preconditioning. This allows producers to have an accurate head count of the calves they are enrolling and means they can be tagged when the calves are scheduled to be worked. Make sure to start the enrollment at least a few months prior to when you plan to sell.

The length of the enrollment process depends largely upon you and your records. If you submit everything to us with the enrollment application, the training and phone interview can be completed in one phone call lasting about an hour. However, if bulls need to be transferred or an on-site review needs to be scheduled, the enrollment can take longer. Starting well in advance of marketing means you will have the

tags in plenty of time and be able to take full advantage of the Online Listing Site to promote your calves.

Q. \$1.00 is really cheap for a custom-printed tag. Is it ok to enroll if I really just want ear tags?

A. While we do identify calves enrolled in AngusSource with a program-compliant ear tag, there is much more to the pro-

gram than a tag. If you are not wanting to enroll in an ASV program, we recommend that you purchase ranch tags from The Tag Store at www.customcattletags.com. Here you can choose from different sizes, colors and customizable options. The same size tag used by the AngusSource program is just 99¢ and includes up to three lines of text and a management number for free.

Each producer has different questions depending on their own operation and management practices. If the above Q&A hasn't provided enough information, I encourage you to call and talk with one of our staff. We look forward to answering your questions and working with you on your enrollment.

