

The Source



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

Maintenance marketing

This year when we finished with the combine, it was obvious we needed to do some maintenance on the corn head. It was a long process, but finally it is back together and ready to go this fall. This project required lots of hands, from taking off the stalk rolls, chains and gears to putting the snoots back on.

This is the perfect time of year to perform maintenance on your marketing program, too. It is pretty easy to tell when the corn head doesn't work

efficiently, but how can you tell when to perform maintenance on your program?

When your calves start hitting the ground this year, look at them closely. At weaning time, decide if you are satisfied with the weight of the calves and how they look. When you sell those calves, take a minute and figure out if you are happy with the price. If you feed out your calves, how did they gain and grade?

Remember, the bulls are at least 50% of the genetic makeup of your calf crop. If you keep back replacement

heifers for your herd, those bulls can account for a higher percentage. Look at the expected progeny differences (EPDs) on the bulls you use and compare those to the breed average (available online at www.angus.org/Nce/BreedAverageEPDs.aspx). Are they higher or lower? Is it time to do a little maintenance and improve the genetic quality of your bull battery?

It is pretty hard to market a product if you don't have any buyers. Ultimately it is the consumer who makes the buying

choices. What does the consumer want? This is a tough question. Consumers choose what, when and how much they buy. Quality is on the list and so is source. Consumers want more information about their food from the beginning to the end. All of these "wants" will influence our decisions about how we manage and market our products.

What do the buyers want? They want cattle with good genetics that will stay alive and gain in the feedlot. Most

Spring 2014 breed average EPD and \$Values

	Production								Maternal						Carcass				\$Values			
	CED	BW	WW	YW	RADG	YH	SC	Doc	HP	CEM	Milk	MW	MH	\$EN	CW	Marb	RE	Fat	\$W	\$F	\$G	\$B
Current Sires ¹	+5	+1.7	+47	+84	+16	+5	+73	+10	+8.6	+8	+23	+29	+3	-2.94	+26	+43	+36	+010	+30.77	+29.04	+27.80	+67.28
Main Sires	+6	+1.5	+49	+88	+16	+5	+76	+11	+8.4	+8	+24	+26	+3	-3.30	+27	+44	+37	+012	+33.89	+33.31	+27.16	+67.94
Supplemental Sires	+6	+1.4	+52	+93	+16	+5	+87	+12	+9.3	+8	+26	+33	+3	-9.60	+31	+46	+47	+013	+34.91	+38.41	+28.94	+74.71
Current Dams ¹	+4	+2.1	+43	+76	+15	+5	+60	+9	+8.5	+8	+22	+29	+3	+1.47	+22	+40	+27	+006	+27.72	+21.10	+26.47	+61.45
Non-Parent Bulls	+5	+1.8	+47	+83	+16	+5	+73	+11	+8.9	+8	+24			-4.06	+25	+46	+42	+008	+30.10	+28.30	+29.97	+69.56
Non-Parent Cows	+5	+1.8	+46	+82	+15	+5	+63	+11	+8.9	+8	+24			-3.50	+26	+52	+47	+008	+29.67	+27.47	+30.61	+69.96

¹At least one calf recorded in herd book within the past two years.

buyers will tell you quality genetics are at the top of the list, but it doesn't stop there. They want calves that have been weaned, castrated and vaccinated, too. Most buyers fill orders for several feedyards. Ask them what they are looking for when they buy calves.

Give your marketing a boost

Quality calves stand out, but the extra money you spent to buy outstanding genetics may not be as easy to spot when your calves are on the video screen or enter the sale barn for their minute in the spotlight. Providing a buyer with data and information prior to the sale of those efficient calves isn't difficult or expensive if you use registered-Angus bulls.

The neon green AngusSource® Genetic tags stand out and tell buyers you have enrolled in the American Angus Association's genetic, source and group age program backed by powerful information and data from the most progressive breed today.

When producers enroll in AngusSource Genetic, they have the option to complete their marketing document over the phone or online. Actually, this marketing document tells buyers which bulls were used to sire the enrolled calves, along with the most up-to-date EPDs on those sires.

Producers can add vaccination dates and what products were used, weaning and branding dates, plus any carcass data from previous calf crops, if available. You can customize this document to fit your calf crop and your management style. More than 600 buyers have signed up to receive weekly emails listing the marketing document of the calves selling that week. Once producers see the average EPDs on their marketing document, they want to improve those numbers and set goals to improve their calves' genetics. This is a good time to visit with an American Angus Association regional manager for your area (see page 54).

The current calf market really doesn't tell many producers they should do any maintenance on their marketing or management programs. Yet this is the perfect time to do some maintenance to your program by adding AngusSource Genetic to your to-do list.

When the market is good, producers do not want to add extra work to their day. However, when the market is down, producers will look for every trick in the book to make a few extra dollars.

Marketing calves isn't any different from your machinery maintenance program. Each year you change the oil and filters in your equipment and perform other maintenance chores. This year, and every year, you should enroll your calves in AngusSource Genetic to keep your marketing program running smoothly and efficiently.

