



The Source

by **GINETTE GOTTSWILLER**, *American Angus Association*

Traceability will open markets

The Cattle Industry Convention & NCBA Trade Show in San Diego was truly a treasure trove of information, and the oceanside location gave participants the opportunity to absorb a variety of material.

I was able to attend the Learning Lounge session featuring Rabobank's Don Close, vice president of food and agribusiness research. He spoke on how to stay competitive in the global beef trade while the industry continues to watch consumption and production grow.

Close offered some recommendations for the U.S. beef industry to remain competitive. One of those recommendations was implementing voluntary, industry-driven cattle and beef traceability programs. Consumers have a burning desire to know where their food comes from and how it is produced.

Traceability can be challenging, but the benefits may be essential in the current climate. It gives producers

the opportunity to showcase their products and stewardship. There are currently a number of traceability programs with sizeable groups of cattle in those programs that will give a solid foundation. Close expressed that given the current market situation, it may be time to accept the advantages traceability can offer.

In San Diego, an industry group predicted that China will open its market by the middle of the year. Philip Seng, CEO of the Denver-based U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) said the last issue to be resolved is the procedure to track U.S. cattle, and Chinese representatives will audit the system.

The global marketplace can definitely be a driver for additional value in the U.S. beef herd. Beef producers should look at value-added programs such as AngusSource® to identify their 2015 and 2016 calf crops this year. Lance Zimmerman of CattleFax urged producers to look for ways to identify higher-quality calves from the commodity market.

Since 2003, AngusSource has been a pillar of the commercial program at the American Angus Association. This program gives commercial-Angus producers a way to convey their calves' genetic potential and additional value to potential buyers. Each calf is identified with a program-compliant ear tag, and a Marketing Document is generated for each enrollment group. This document includes a listing of each registered-Angus bull used to sire the calf crop, as well as the current expected progeny differences (EPDs) and \$Value indexes.

Additionally, producers can list management practices, health protocols and nutrition information if they desire. This completed document is then sent via email to a list of more than 600 potential buyers who have asked to know

when and where quality Angus-sired calves will be selling. The listing also appears on the www.angussource.com website for potential buyers to browse each day as listings are posted.

The time is now to enroll your calves in AngusSource. It is a USDA process-verified program (PVP) that verifies source, group age and at minimum 50% Angus-sired genetics. It is one of the lowest-cost verification programs on the market today that can open doors to new buyers or new markets that may become available. All black-hided calves are not created equal. It just makes "cents" to verify your quality Angus genetics used to sire your calf crop. Visit www.angussource.com or call 816-383-5100 and ask for the AngusSource Department.

Editor's Note: *Ginette Gottswiller is the director of commercial programs for the American Angus Association.*

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