

The Source

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



Comparing prices shows AngusSource advantage

It has been a crazy week. I had the pleasure of attending the Superior sale in Steamboat Springs, Colo., this year. I can't imagine there were many disappointed producers among those who sold their calves. Prices were very good. The air was full of excitement and anticipation wondering where the market would go next.

There was not a shortage of buyers in the seats, but several were disappointed they were not able to purchase the lots they came to buy. I was able to talk with several buyers and learn more about how they choose the lots they want to bid on. Every buyer has a little different strategy, but most had the same comment — quality genetics matter.

Here are a few tips directly from the buyers. Document the genetics. When the sale book says “out of Angus and Angus-cross cows bred to Angus bulls,” that really doesn't say much. List the name of the sires used. Tell them how many days your calving season lasted. Vaccinations matter, and, many told me, at minimum they would not look below a VAC-34 program.

I'm going to compare some lots

of home-raised steer calves. The first comparison is 450- to 460-pound (lb.) steer calves from Region 2. There were nine lots that sold at that weight and were not mixed loads.

The first group was VAC-45 and sired by Angus and Hereford bulls. They brought \$313 per hundredweight (cwt.).

Next up was a set of VAC-34 calves out of known Angus sires and program but no value-added programs. These brought \$308.

Another group of calves that were age-verified, non-hormone-treated cattle (NHTC) and VAC-45 but out of Angus and Hereford sires came in at \$304.

Now an AngusSource® Genetic set of calves that were VAC-34, NHTC, had listed sires, and 85% of the calves were born in 45 days came in at \$320.50 per cwt. If you check out the CattleFax report, calves from Montana/Wyoming from that weight class during this time period averaged between \$276 and \$290.

Heavier calves

Another group of AngusSource calves that sold was from Oregon and weighed 700 lb. They were sold as a mixed load

with NHTC verification, known Angus genetics, VAC-45 and certified for good agricultural practices (GAP). They brought a blistering \$235.75 per cwt. Now a group of same-weight calves, but not a mixed load, from California sold for \$227. I compared the lots — everything was the same except they were age-verified with another company. These lots are so similar I would love to ask the buyers what was the difference other than \$61.75 per calf.

Was it the online marketing document AngusSource uses to reach more than 600 potential buyers? Had he purchased those calves before and they were outstanding in quality grade? Was it the sale sheets AngusSource has available at each sale for buyers to look through the \$B and \$W values at the sale? I will never know the answer to this question, but I do believe the marketing document is one of the best ways to reach potential buyers with information that can set enrolled calves apart.

Calf prices are good, yet there are still some real differences from the high prices to the low prices. While enrolling in AngusSource or AngusSource Genetic

won't guarantee you results like I saw in Steamboat, it can give you the same marketing opportunity it gave those producers. Every producer who enrolls in AngusSource and AngusSource Genetic can complete a marketing document. I encourage every producer to put down as much information as they can about their calves. List what vaccinations you gave, what type of feed and mineral program you use and any other management-related information. Document if you are BQA-certified.

Pick up the phone and call the AngusSource Department at 816-383-5100 to request your enrollment form and find out more about the programs and services the American Angus Association offers commercial cattlemen who use registered-Angus bulls on their operation.



Editor's Note: *Ginette Kurtz is the director of commercial programs.*