



The Source

by **SARA SNIDER**, director of AngusSource,[®]
American Angus Association

Don't let up

You've calved the cows. They've raised the calves. It's time to market. Your work with this year's calf crop is almost done. Or is it?

If the calves are still on your operation, there are still ways to add value to them and capture more dollars when they sell.

Get enrolled

If you haven't enrolled your calves in AngusSource[®] or Gateway yet, that is a logical place to start. The key to adding value is to document information about your calves through an approved program. Documenting the source and age of your calves can open doors to new marketing avenues. Namely, the Japan export market.

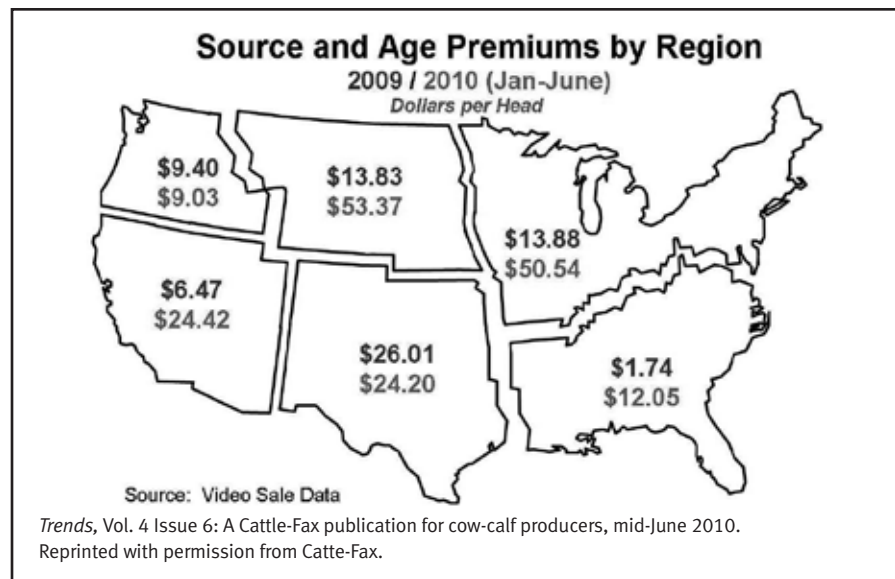
U.S. beef exports to Japan were up 31% through early June and the need for age-verified calves remains strong. The June 2010 Cattle-Fax *Trends* shows that age-verification premiums, also referred to as "Japan" premiums, have increased in most regions. Keep in mind that calves enrolled in verification programs are usually participating in other value-

added programs like preconditioning, natural, etc. However, a large portion of the premiums are attributed to age-verification.

With dollars on the table and the low cost of enrollment in AngusSource and Gateway, I am confused as to why every producer isn't verifying their calves. I think many producers think it will be too hard, that they don't have enough records and they won't qualify. But enrolling your calves in AngusSource or Gateway is easier than you think.

As I write this column, enrollments in AngusSource are up 18.2% compared to 2009. In the next month we will enroll the 500,000th calf into the program, and interest in Gateway continues to build. Since inception, more than 1,600 producers have taken advantage of the low enrollment fees and outstanding customer service. If they can do it, so can you.

Getting started is as simple as visiting www.angussource.com to download the enrollment form, or calling 816-383-5100 to request one from the AngusSource department. Once you



have read through the manual, you will complete and submit the enrollment forms. A staff member will then contact you to complete the training and calf enrollment. Copies of required records are submitted, the enrollment fee is paid, program tags are purchased and your enrollment is complete. Some producers will require an on-site ranch review prior to the enrollment being approved. We encourage you to enroll well in advance of marketing to ensure enough time to complete the process.

Calves must be tagged prior to leaving the ranch of origin. Many producers think once the tags are in they are done. But don't stop there. There are still ways to add value. Enrolling is only the first half of the program; the second half is to communicate that value to potential buyers.

Documenting more value

Once your calves are enrolled, you are issued a Verification Certificate for the program you enrolled in. If you enrolled in AngusSource, the certificate will document you as the source, the group age of your calves, and a listing of the number of registered Angus bulls that sired your calves, as well as an average of their expected progeny differences (EPDs) and dollar values (\$Values).

If you enrolled in Gateway, you will be documented as the source, and the group age of your calves will be listed.

The certificate, along with the program tag, is the key to your calves' verification. It is the passport for those calves to enter into the value-added marketing system. All of that is accomplished with the information documented on the top half of the Verification Certificate. The bottom half of the certificate is an opportunity for you to document additional information.

Producers enroll in a verification program because they want to make more money. It is as simple as that. But, it is important to be realistic in your expectations of the premiums you can receive. Many producers who participate in a source- and age-verification

program also participate in other value-added programs like preconditioning, natural, non-hormone treated, etc. Age verification alone may not add enough value to your calves to overcome the lack of vaccinations, quality genetics and management that might have your calves discounted to start with.

It is important to convey to potential buyers all of the programs and management practices you have completed to add value to your calves. Although AngusSource and Gateway can't verify your vaccinations, weaning or past carcass data, we do provide a place for you to document it. The bottom half of the certificate is open for producers to document additional information.

Once you have customized your Verification Certificate and added sale information, we will post it as an online listing to the website and e-mail it to more than 600 potential buyers. Sale information will also be listed, so whether your calves are available from the ranch, through a local auction market or on a video auction, interested buyers will know when and where your calves are available for sale.

The final step

Once your calves are sold, your work is almost done. Make sure to provide the Verification Certificate to the new owner or let them know that they can request one along with a tag manifest from the AngusSource department. Enrolling your calves at the ranch is just the first step for those calves to qualify for export. The feeder will need the Certificate if they are to continue on their way to Japan.

Producers throughout the country are enjoying a strong feeder-calf market, but don't leave money on the table. Enrollment in AngusSource or Gateway, as well as other value-added programs, gives you the opportunity to capture additional premiums. Contact us today to get started. The extra work is well worth it!

**Premiums for
age and source
verifications are
greater in most
regions this year
compared to last.**