

Information Sells

AngusSource program provides a way to market cattle with detailed records.

Story by
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Three Nebraska ranchers have been individually identifying and weighing every calf that has touched the ground on their place since 1958. At branding time all the calves are tattooed for permanent identification (ID). While this may sound like a purebred beef operation, it's not.

Ken Pelster and his brothers David and Dan manage a 600-cow commercial Angus operation located on the east end of the Sandhills near Bartlett. The Pelsters' detailed recordkeeping is

one way they add value when marketing their feeder calves each November at Elgin Livestock Sales Inc., Elgin, Neb.

In 2004 the Pelsters marketed 300 steers through the American Angus Association AngusSource program for the first time. With the enrollment of their known Angus-sired calves in the program, they were able to create a marketing document (see Fig. 1) listing all pertinent information about the group to be auctioned.

The marketing document was posted online and distributed to potential buyers by the Association as part of the program's service. The

Pelsters were able to distribute the AngusSource Marketing Document on their own, as well.

"I do like the AngusSource document, specifically because you can list your sires and all the EPDs (expected progeny differences) on them," Ken says. "It also has an area to list how the calves were handled. I think it is pretty self-explanatory. Once people know what AngusSource is, a lot of feedyards will be looking for it — the CAB (Certified Angus Beef LLC) feedyards anyway — as a source of purchasing."

Cap Proffitt, manager of Barton County Feeders Inc., Ellinwood, Kan., says his CAB partner feedlot is interested in the information provided to buyers through the AngusSource program.

"I have noticed a growing trend in producers sharing more information," Proffitt says. "I think that's essential for all segments of the industry — not only their willingness to share, but our willingness to know all we can about any given set of cattle."

If you're wondering if it's worth keeping track of the management history and genetics of a group of cattle, Proffitt doesn't leave much question.

"All the information they can provide helps me make a determination of the degree of interest that I have in any particular set of cattle," he says. "The more information I have, the higher comfort level I have in purchasing those cattle, which should translate to really more money for the producer."

Selling information

Ken has been providing information to buyers for a long time, composing a letter each year to be sent to potential bidders discussing the calves for sale. The AngusSource Marketing Document may just be the next stage of his marketing. He says it's key to provide as much information as possible so that "everybody knows exactly what they are going to be bidding on."

The Pelsters are aware that the beef industry is on its way to a national ID program. Their attention to individual ID is supported through a short calving season where they can track individual birthdates on a large scale.

"We always figure a 50-day breeding season. We've done this

for probably 35, 45 years now. We start calving around the first of March on the old cows, and by the 15th of April most of them are done. At least 85% of our cows calve within the first heat cycle. We might get at least 400 calves born in March, so hopefully we don't get snow."

Ken details the vaccinations on his cattle, including product serial numbers and the dates given according to Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) guidelines. Proffitt says he looks at vaccination history because "it would be nice to know that the previous vaccination history falls in line with the recommendation of the feedyard's consulting vet."

Another point of interest to potential buyers is the past feeding history.

"We have a growing awareness and a growing responsibility as a feedyard and as an industry toward food safety. So it's important that the information is available," Proffitt says. "If I know the past feeding background of that particular set of cattle, I can tailor my feeding program to make the two programs compatible."

A changing marketplace

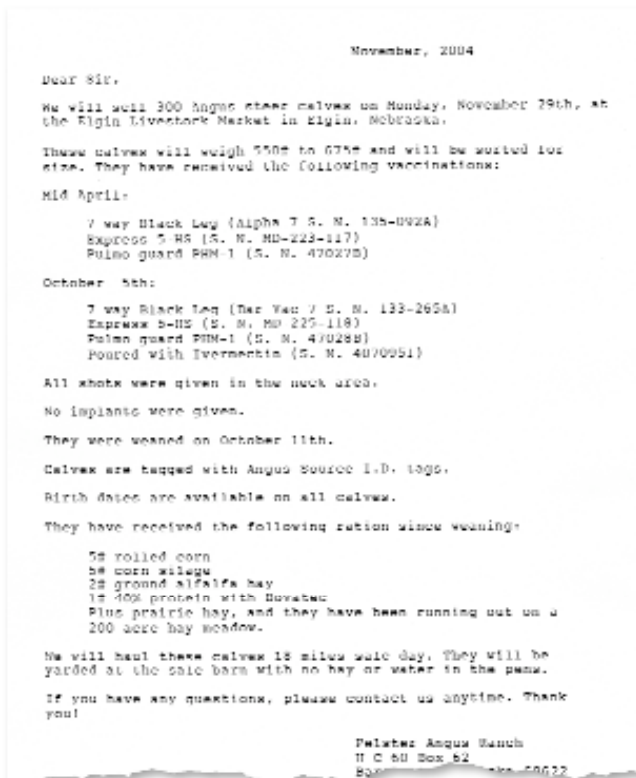
The information exchange isn't just a one-way street. Providing the genetics behind a group of cattle can foster a partnership between a cow-calf producer and a feedyard to provide feedback in both directions.

"I want to know the genetics of the cattle so that I can track them and use that decision whether or not to purchase those cattle in the future," Proffitt says. "Not only that, we are very interested in sharing data with producers, whether they retain some degree of ownership or whether they just sell them. We are committed to providing all the feedback to that producer we can so that he can improve his genetics and his management practices."

Proffitt says Barton County Feeders has traditionally focused on feeding cattle for its customers with very few yard-owned cattle. But as the industry has changed, so has the yard's need for certain cattle with known histories.

The feedyard is providing a fast-food giant with source-identified cattle for harvest and use of the grinds. Proffitt says, "We have committed a certain number of head per week to the fast-food company to supply their source-verified

The AngusSource program is not just a tag. Only calves sired by registered Angus bulls enrolled by the ranch of origin can be marketed in the program. To learn more about enrolling your known Angus-sired calves, contact the American Angus Association at (816) 383-5100 or visit the Web site at www.angussource.com.



Ken Pelster has composed his own letter to market his feeder calves in years past. For the first time in 2004, he added an AngusSource Marketing Document to the information provided to potential buyers.

Fig. 1: AngusSource Feeder Cattle Marketing Document

A. Information about the buyer and calves.

- The buyer can list his or her contact information, including address and phone number.
- The number of calves to be sold and weights can be included, along with breed makeup of the cow herd. The date and place the calves are to be marketed is also listed.
- Documenting the age of cattle continues to become more important within the industry, and this information can be included on the document.

B. Sire information.

- Known Angus genetics are desired in the marketplace. The calves' sires are included in the document. The sires' expected progeny differences (EPDs) are listed as well.

C. Management practices.

- Previous management practices are important pieces of information to many buyers. Weaning history, from the date weaned to the days backgrounded and feeds consumed, can be included.

D. Health procedures.


- A special section is available to list the vaccination history of the calves. The vaccines given, the date given and even details such as serial numbers of the products can be included.

E. Comment.

- Producers can provide any other information about the calves here. Pertinent information about the calves' genetics, health history or programs the calves may be ready for (like a non-implant program) can be listed.

F. Producer's signature.

- Producers can sign and date the document, attesting the information provided is deemed an accurate representation of the calves to be marketed.



Feeder Cattle Marketing Document

Cattle to be sold 11/29/04, Elgin Livestock Auction, Elgin NE

Sold by: Pelster Ranch
 HC 60 Box 62
 Bartlett, NE 68622
 Phone: (402) 843-2463

Birth dates: Feb - Apr 2004 A

Breed Makeup of cowherd: Angus

300 Steers
0 Heifers
Steers Avg Wt 625 Range 550 - 675
Heifers Avg Wt

Sired by the following group of registered Angus bulls: B

Bull No. Name	Production EPD										Carcass EPD				Threshold EPD				NValues		
	BW	WW	MR	YW	YH	MW	MI	SC	CW	Marb	RE	Fat	%RF	%IMF	SE	Fat	%RF	SP	SC	SR	
1372637 Angus Alliance 950	+0.3	+41	+17	+79							1+08	1+02	1+00	1+08				121.83	18.43	229.44	
1180677 Heavymetal of R R 2418	+0.0	+41	+28	+59	-1	+11	+2	+38	+9	-12	+34	-320	+44	-37	+21	-1018	+03	+118	+618	+1478	
13284639 D.C.C Hunter 9283	-1	132	129	162	1+3	1+35	1+7	-30	1+0	1+06	1+09	1+00	1+14	-29	1+20	1+08	1+20	18.24	-431	14.24	
13282107 D.C.C Hunter 6908	-3.1	+29	+16	+37	-5	-37	-8	-106	1+1	1+05	1+09	1+01	1+20	-10	+17	1+14	1+22	18.76	19.97	114.96	
1351194 D.C.C. Kalkreuth 8551	-3	+38	+5	+72	-7	-36	-9	-108	1+4	1+0	1+12	1+02	1+10	-10	+16	+118	+38	+16.92	+6.78	+11.77	
13703802 Western Traveler K D 156	13.8	142	+20	+75	1+22	1+16			1+15	1+12	1+35	1+01	1+58	1+06	1+22	1+016	-62	115.81	112.82	126.44	
14903855 84+ Locust Hill Grand Lad R3191	+2.0	+39	+12	+66				1-15						+11	+03	-102	+73	+18.41	+17.02	+18.41	
13803544 R. G. Foreline 2050	12.3	126	+19	181	1+3			1+89	1+12	1+01	1+11	1+10	1+08	1+02	1+08	-1+062	-88	125.80	19.66	128.15	
1484608 Omega A Ranch 798	+5.2	+19	+31	+70										+06	1+01	+181	-18	+15.96	+18.36	+20.27	
13649404 Graja Albarda 140	14.7	140	-18	174										-02	1+00	-1+062	-15	117.47	+17.30	+23.21	
14908184 Mize Partner 1799	+0.1	+15	+16	+61				1+62	1+1	1+18	1+01	1+018	1+11	+14	1+01	+1018	-74	+18.09	+13.86	+22.85	
13289993 Mize Partner 899	11.8	-21	-12	87					1+2	1+26	1+35	1+028	1+25	1+01	1+09	+1+062	+25	+5.06	+12.99	+18.15	
13289992 Mize Partner 898	+0.0	+11	+14	+67				1+51	1+2	1+12	1+13	1+004	1+16	-08	1+01	-1+035	+18	+15.47	+11.85	+22.24	
Average:	12.2	127	+17	168	-3	-15	-3	1+24	1+4	1+08	1+15	-1+062	+14	-02	+18	-1+081	+04	+13.03	+16.63	+18.96	

Management Practices: Weaned on 10/1/04. Backgrounded 49 days. Rank broke. Branded on Left Hip C

Health procedures: D

Vaccination	Alpha 7	04/12/04	Vaccination	Express 5-	04/12/04
				HS	
Vaccination	Pulmo-Guard PFM-	04/12/04	Castration	knife cut	04/12/04
Vaccination	Bar Vac 7	10/05/04	Vaccination	Express 5HS	10/05/04
Vaccination	Pulmo-Guard PFM-	10/05/04	Deworming	Ivomec	10/05/04

E Comment: All shots given in the neck. No implants. Individual birth dates available. Fed 5lbs rolled corn, 5lbs. corn silage, 2 lbs ground alfalfa hay, 1 lb of 40% protein with Bova Tech and prairie hay. Hauled 18 miles sale day. Dry penned.

I attest that the above information is accurate and representative of these cattle to be marketed. F

Ken Pelster
 (Signature) 11/29/04
 (Date)

The AngusSource Program is provided by the American Angus Association (AAA) to assist cow-calf producers in marketing their Angus-sired cattle. Information may only be submitted to the AngusSource Program on cattle sired by registered Angus bulls, prior to the cattle's initial movement from the farm/ranch of origin to a new site. The AngusSource Program does not record subsequent ownership or location transfers. The AAA is not responsible for inaccurate information submitted, incorrectly identified cattle, or inappropriate use of information processed through the AngusSource Program. Nor does the AAA independently audit or verify the information submitted to it by cow-calf producers. Cattle listed on this document should be tagged with official AngusSource Program tags, and tags are not to be removed.

marketing program. If I can't come up with customer cattle to fulfill that need, I then go to the marketplace to purchase them."

The AngusSource Marketing Document provides Barton County Feeders with the history they need for the fast-food company's source-verified program, including a signed affidavit from the ranch of origin where the calves were born. Calves in the program are bringing a premium of up to \$2 more per hundredweight (cwt.) for their owners.

Providing the known history of calves will continue to become more important and be in higher demand within the beef industry, Ken says.

"Cattle are my only income. I'd better be honest in marketing or I can't expect these guys to come back," he adds. "Small or large breeder, I think [AngusSource] tags will be what the feeders are going to be looking for in a program like this — so they can put together a bunch of identified calves."

Enroll your cattle, create your own marketing document

You can be a part of the AngusSource program by enrolling your cattle through the American Angus Association Commercial Programs Department. Cattle meeting program criteria can be enrolled over the Internet at www.angussource.com or by calling Brenda Schafer or Ginette Kurtz at (816) 383-5100.

The marketing document is an important step in getting information out about the calves you have for sale through AngusSource. It should be created when the calves are ready to be marketed, and it can be activated on the AngusSource Web site for up to 90 days prior to the sale date, so plan ahead. A list of available AngusSource cattle is also e-mailed by the Association to more than 400 feedyards.

This marketing document can be used in many ways, from printing it out and giving it to potential buyers or livestock auctions to having it included in sale book inserts.

The document can include, but isn't limited to,

weaning information, health/management procedures (product and date administered for vaccinations/boosters, castration, deworming and implant regimen), sale date and location, plus additional comments.

Ken Pelster, a Bartlett, Neb., commercial Angus producer, says documenting management practices doesn't have to be high tech. He says producers just need to get a system down for recording information, and stick to it.

"I don't have a computer; all my management practices are written down in the book. I can go back on our cows. It takes a little bit of time, but I can tell you within one or two bulls what they are out of," he says. "When we put our cows out on pasture, most of our cows will go in 50-head bunches. We turn them out by the year they are born, their age. I usually try to get two bulls that are half brothers that go with each bunch of cows."