

# AngusSource Provides a Marketing Tool

*Cattlemen who use registered Angus bulls can give buyers documented information on genetics, origin and ranch-specific health protocols by enrolling cattle in the AngusSource program.*



Many backgrounders and feedlot buyers look for known Angus genetics to enroll in specialized marketing programs to fit today's market demand. The white AngusSource tags identify calves that are progeny of registered Angus sires or straightbred commercial Angus cows.

*Story & photos by*  
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Many beef industry programs have promised to return valuable information to stockmen willing to record required details. Those programs may have provided an advantage for some. But for others, there hasn't been a program designed to work in concert with their management practices, and today is not the time to be recording piles of information that their program is unable to incorporate.

Matt Perrier, American Angus Association director of commercial programs, says the Association debuted AngusSource Aug. 6, 2003, to offer producers the opportunity to enroll their cattle in a program and continue the management practices that work for them.

If you're reading the *Angus Beef Bulletin*, you may have already

identified that Angus genetics are a key part of your breeding program, and the Angus breed offers you the opportunity to market the kind and type of calves that fit market demand.

"But when you go to market with your Angus-influenced calf crop, have you ever wondered how you would convey to potential buyers that these calves aren't just black, they're Angus?" Perrier asks. "Have you wondered how you can document and show the vaccination protocol so a backgrounder or feedlot buyer knows these calves are on their way to a productive growing period? Have you wondered how you could document the origin of your cattle for future governmental regulations or specialized marketing programs?"

AngusSource allows producers to continue with the management plan that works best for them, he says, and to document their Angus genetics, origin and health programs. The information producers want to provide is presented in a concise marketing document to be distributed to potential buyers, livestock market managers and brokers.

This marketing document is important in today's industry, says Mike Samples, manager of Farmers & Ranchers Livestock Commission Co. Inc., Salina, Kan. He has been offering a black-influence sale for the last six years and says a program like AngusSource may become a big part of that sale.

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Producers may continue with the management plan that works best for them and still enroll their cattle in the AngusSource program. Matt Perrier, American Angus Association director of commercial programs, says that's the beauty of the program. A specific health program doesn't fit every operation; however, producers can document what vaccine protocol their calves have been through and provide a marketing document at time of sale through the AngusSource program.



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Tagging calves can take place at birth, branding or vaccinating. The tags are designed to remain in the calves' ears through harvest, but they don't guarantee carcass data can be collected. Sellers need to discuss with the buyers "terms of sale" if information is sought throughout the feeding period or at harvest.

The *Angus Beef Bulletin* sat down with Samples and Perrier to ask questions that cattlemen may have about this new program.

**Find your answers****Who, specifically, is this program designed for?**

It was developed for commercial cow-calf producers wishing to increase the value of their Angus-sired feeder cattle and replacement females, Perrier says. It also enables seedstock providers to offer ear tags



Mike Samples, manager of Farmers and Ranchers Livestock Commission Co. Inc., Salina, Kan., says he has buyers that seek known Angus genetics. The marketing document that producers receive when enrolling cattle in the AngusSource program can provide that information and much more. The document lists potential sires and their expected progeny differences, vaccination protocols, any past group carcass data, as well as any other information pertaining to the group of calves that's pertinent to potential buyers.

as a service to their customers, it offers feedyard buyers a way to source high-quality feeder cattle of known origin, and it assists other commercial cattlemen searching for replacement females with documented Angus genetics.

**What is the cost of the AngusSource program?**

The \$1-per-tag cost covers all tag and data entry costs for each animal. It also includes a marketing document and a 90-day Internet listing prior to the date of sale of the cattle, Perrier says.

**Does the producer automatically get carcass information returned on these cattle?**

No. The AngusSource tags were designed to remain in feeder cattle's ears to the packing plant; but, Perrier warns, *you must communicate with the feedyard* if you wish to receive feedlot and carcass information. This is usually best specified in the "terms of trade" when selling feeder cattle.

**If I put these tags in, are they going to stay?**

While there is no requirement that the tags must stay in the animals' ears through their lifespans, the tags have a good retention rate, Perrier says. He is confident that producers can use the tags to identify calves at birth, branding, vaccination or weaning time, and the tags will remain with them through marketing time, whether as weaned calves or yearlings. In fact, similar tags are used on many operations as "cow herd tags," so they should be fit for long-time use in replacement females as well, Perrier adds.

**Is the market demanding information from the ranch about the cattle?**

Samples says the sun has set on the days when throwing your hand in the air at the auction and stating, "These calves have had all their shots," means anything to buyers. "I want a rancher to come in here with a sheet of paper telling me the health program their cattle have been through, no matter if it is a specific drug company's protocol or their own health program; that information is needed," Samples says.

Perrier adds, "Commercial cow-calf producers across the country are looking for ways to improve the profitability of their operations. AngusSource provides an easy, affordable way to capture the information many producers already have and to turn it into dollars. In today's beef industry, premiums aren't paid on the cattle you sell, they're paid on the information you provide."

**How long will my tag order take to process?**

Tags are shipped via regular ground transportation from the Allflex facility in Dallas, Texas, Perrier says. Most orders should be delivered within 7 to 10 business days of your order.

**Are known genetics key to marketing cattle in today's industry?**

"Absolutely," Samples says. "There are buyers, whether they be backgrounders or feedlot buyers, who desire to know the genetics and the background of these cattle. A lot of people are really excited about buying nice Angus-cross calves, so that is one reason we want to have an Angus-influence sale."

**Do all of my calves need to be out of a registered bull?**

American Angus Association registration numbers are required on the sires or maternal grandsires of all submitted groups of cattle, Perrier says.

Potential sires of the calves are not the only way to document Angus genetics. What this means is that producers who have a straightbred commercial Angus cow herd, but use another breed on the sire side, may still participate in AngusSource, Perrier says. In this case the program requires producers to provide registration numbers of the cows' sires (maternal grandsires) before enrolling.

**Do my calves need to be individually matched to their sire and/or dam?**

No. AngusSource allows producers to submit information

about the entire group instead of individually managed animals, Perrier says.

**Can AngusSource be a useful marketing tool for progressive cattlemen?**

Samples says that a program, such as AngusSource, is needed in the cattle industry. "I believe if people want to go out and spend the money on a good Angus bull, then they should be willing to go to the expense of putting in a tag saying that these calves are Angus calves," he says. "I believe it will help bring a premium on those calves when they bring them to market."

**Will enrolling calves in the AngusSource program guarantee a premium?**

No, but by participating in an AngusSource sale, marketing to a progressive feedyard that recognizes the value of these documented cattle, or selling replacement heifers to a cattleman wishing to find females of known origin, you can use the information held in the AngusSource program to command top dollars, Perrier points out. "In today's strong market, cattle are in short enough supply that nearly *all* calves are being purchased at excellent prices," he adds. "However we have all seen a market like this slip away, and that is when calves with that preweaning information will really show their increased value."

Samples agrees and says, "I do believe that the cattle that are documented in a program will see a premium, and in the future I think it will be more evident the amount of premiums that will be given for these calves and yearlings."



Each tag has a unique number that can be specific to the ranch's traditional tagging system. Producers request the number sequence that is desired, or they can even individually request numbers specific to a cow or tagging system. These individual calf numbers allow producers to record information such as individual weights.