



# Up Front

by **JOHN CROUCH**, executive vice president, American Angus Association

## AngusSource — a step toward the future

You might have heard something in the past couple of months about a new program called AngusSource. What is AngusSource? Why was it developed? How will it help registered Angus breeders and their commercial customers? These are all good questions. Read on as I take the opportunity to provide some answers.

### Basic objectives

For several years commercial cattlemen have expressed their discontent about not being rewarded for the true value of their cattle at marketing time. They purchase good bulls and use proper health and management procedures, so they want to receive a proper return on their investment. We could not agree more.

As our industry trends toward complexity with respect to integration and consolidation, commercial producers are also on a quest for innovations to improve efficiency and profits. The AngusSource program, which was recently rolled out by the American Angus Association, provides

commercial producers with a simple, affordable system for recording preweaning data and the means to turn it into profitable information.

The basic objectives of AngusSource are twofold:

- (1) To offer a program that provides documentation of Angus-influenced cattle with respect to origin, management and genetics to the beef industry supply chain.
- (2) To provide a documented supply of cattle to feedyards and marketers of source-verified beef and beef products.

### Target market

AngusSource is a program for Angus affiliates and commercial cattlemen who use Angus genetics. In order to qualify for the program, cattle should be at least 50% Angus and documented by means of sire or maternal grandsire registration numbers and cow herd breed makeup.

AngusSource cattle will be identified

by ear tags purchased from the Association that show the state of origin of the calves, a herd location code, a customized within-herd management number and a national identification (ID) number [not to be confused with an electronic ID (EID) number]. Calves must be tagged prior to leaving the farm or ranch of origin, and the tag should remain with the animal until harvest, if possible. What's more, the program requires only a \$1-per-calf investment.

AngusSource is primarily a marketing program for commercial cow-calf producers using registered Angus bulls. Any data transfer from subsequent owners must be agreed upon between buyer and seller as the "terms of trade."

AngusSource is not a complete data-tracking program; it simply offers the initial step for the cow-calf producer to document the genetic, source, and processing information about his or her group of cattle.

As infrastructures for EID and other ID technologies become implemented and standardized throughout our industry, AngusSource program developers will consider adoption of these advances. This will allow for a more efficient system to retrieve and store growth and carcass data on both a group and/or individual basis. Chuteside gathering and transferring of information to other entities, including the AngusSource

program, can become a reality. The possibilities and benefits of such programs are endless and limited only by the intellectual processes of our minds.

### Building the future

One of the core strategies of the American Angus Association's strategic plan, which was established by the Board of

Directors this spring, is to "Achieve Angus Excellence Through Information." The adoption of the AngusSource program provides one more tool to assist users of Angus genetics in capturing the true value of their cattle. This

program also enables Association members to offer more customer service to their commercial customers. Whether a seedstock producer purchases AngusSource tags for a customer or simply helps him or her place an order on [www.angussource.com](http://www.angussource.com), it is one more service that can be provided to solidify the business relationship.

Most of us wish to be progressive, but with that comes change. Troy Marshall, editor of *The Seedstock Digest*, said it best: "Everyone talks about the need to provide source-, process- and genetic-verified calves to buyers, and that's exactly what this program hopes to do — increase value by verifying and facilitating the flow of information."

Will AngusSource track every Angus-sired calf and replacement female through the commercial beef industry and reward each owner with a guaranteed premium for participating? No. However, it is an initial step toward giving cow-calf producers the opportunity to convey that their cattle are "better than black ... they're Angus."



### EPD update for affiliates

Each year, Angus affiliates (individuals who are not members of the Association but have recently purchased and received the ownership transfer of a registered Angus bull) receive updated expected progeny differences (EPDs) on all active bulls currently in their ownership. This service is one more benefit that affiliates receive when their Angus seedstock suppliers transfer ownership of the bulls into the affiliate's name. The update includes the bull's name, birth date, and all EPDs available.

### Bull Listing Service, [www.angus.org/bls](http://www.angus.org/bls)

Commercial and registered producers can search for registered Angus bulls by entering their specifications and a geographic area where they wish to purchase bulls. The Bull Listing Service (BLS) allows Angus breeders to list registered Angus bulls for sale on the Internet site. The listing is for a 90-day period and is searchable by location, as well as by sire or by EPD specifications. Interested bull buyers can access this service to find specification-based genetics to improve their cow herd, with the timesaving assistance of the Internet.