

Angus Down Under

Snapshot from the 1997 World Angus Forum in Australia.

BY KEITH EVANS



Some 780 Angus enthusiasts from around the world converged on Sydney, Australia, in October-November to take part in the 1997 World Angus Forum. The United States brought the largest delegation from outside Australia—109 people. In all, 16 countries were represented at the Forum and the meeting of the official international organization, the World Aberdeen-Angus Secretariat.

The Aberdeen-Angus Society of Australia hosted the event, planning a two-day conference program at the Darling Harbour Convention Center, plus an 11-day tour that ended Nov. 9 in Melbourne. The tour traveled through the heart of Angus country in New South Wales and Victoria.

The American Angus Association sponsored pre- and post-Forum tours that took participants into Queensland, Northern Territory and just over the border into South Australia.

Beef quality and its largest branded beef merchandiser, the American Angus Association's Certified Angus Beef (CAB) Program, generated the most interest at the Forum.

Australia needs to compete in the world beef market, since 60% of its beef is exported. Asian countries, particularly Japan, want high-quality beef. This has stimulated feedlots in Australia, where mostly Angus and Angus-cross cattle are fed for export, and a new beef grading system was announced during the Forum.

"We haven't found a way yet to

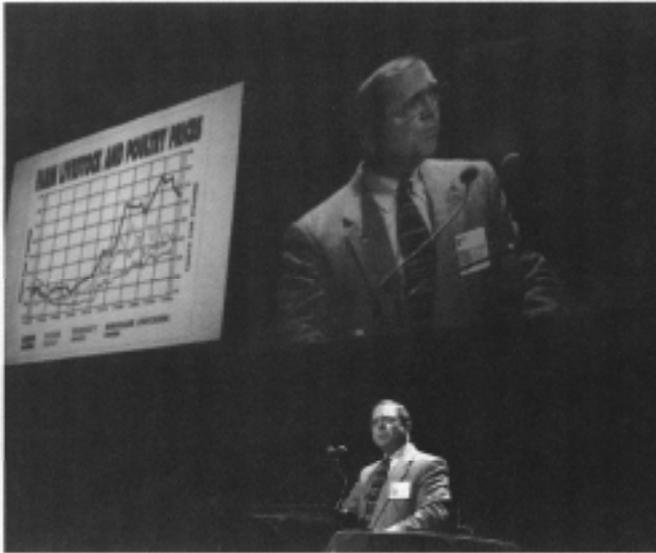
produce beef to compete economically with chicken or even pork, so our future as Angus breeders would appear to be tied closely with the production of consistent, high-quality beef," Dick Spader, American Angus Association executive vice president, told the group.

Others echoed this theme. Andrew Stoekel, executive director of the Centre of International Economics in Australia, urged breeders to focus on quality and build beef's market share. He predicted increased demand for beef in Japan and Korea, and in other parts of Asia. Drew Ferguson, with the Australian Cattle and Beef Industry CRC, said marbling alone can affect the value of a beef carcass in Australia by \$180 Australian (about \$130 U.S.).

After two days of program, fine food,

banquets and sight seeing in Sydney, 280 people, including 103 Americans, left Sydney to tour south to the nation's capitol of Canberra and to herds south in the area. Then it was over the Snowy Mountains into the Murray River Valley and Albury. From there, the tour went on to Melbourne, visiting herds and places of historical interest.

Instead of flying home Nov. 9, 73 people from the United States ventured on to New Zealand for a six-day tour of the North Island. They arrived in the United States Nov. 15. For those who went on the pre-Forum tour, this ended a 26-day trip Down Under.



Richard "Dick" Spader executive vice president of the American Angus Association, uses a chart to help demonstrate to the World Angus Forum audience of some 780 people, that beef can't compete with other meats on price, but instead must compete on quality. Spader was one of five people from the American Angus Association to speak at the Forum in Sydney, Australia.



World Forum tour participants look over part of the 3,000 Angus heifers being bred at Werribee Farm, near Werribee, Victoria, in an international Angus Sire Evaluation test being sponsored by the Aberdeen-Angus Society of Australia, the PerthAngus Group of Australia and the American Angus Association. U.S. Angus bulls are being used as reference sires in the program.



These Angus cows and calves are at Ythanbrae, in the beautiful hill country 62 miles northeast of Melbourne. The Angus stud was started some 30 years ago by Don and Jenny Lawson. Dons family migrated from the Ythan River in Scotland during the Australian Gold Rush. The Lawson children, Harry, Tom and Sarah, are also involved in the 700-cow operation that is all bred using artificial insemination (AI).



Vivienne Kerr, decision maker at Tibooburra Angus near Hoddles Creek, Victoria, chats with Bill Wilson, Cloverdale, Ind. The Tibooburra Angus Stud, owned by Vivienne and Laurie Kerr, was the final stop on the World Angus Forum Tour. Their 250 registered cows are primarily of U.S. breeding. They use high-marbling, low-birth-weight expected progeny difference (EPD) bulls from the United States.



Cattle are on feed, western Kansas style, at Rockdale Beef near Yanco, New South Wales. The lots can handle 40,000 head of Angus, Murray Grey and some Hereford cattle. the ration includes barley, corn, wheat, hay pellets, citrus pulp, rice hulls, grape mark and corn and oat silage. The cattle are fed 120-250 days, depending upon breed and demand, for the Japanese market.