

DECISIONS THAT DRIVE DESTINY

Mitigate risk and anticipate trends.

by Karen Hiltbrand, American Angus Association

This year certainly has not been easy, especially when it comes to making important decisions that affect your farm or ranch. Kevin Ochsner, owner of Agcellerate Consulting Company and host of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) television program, *Cattlemen to Cattlemen*, assured the American Angus Association members at the 137th Angus Annual Meeting in Kansas City, Mo., there is power behind the decisions that drive our future.

While much of 2020 has been vastly uncharted waters, "mitigating risk and anticipating trends in the markets is necessary," Ochsner said.

From COVID-19 ramifications to the uptick in the demand for quality meats at the grocery store, to analyzing the beef industry's environmental footprint — all of these are trends producers need to keep in mind to meet consumers' needs. Ochsner simply puts it,

"I THINK IT'S CRITICALLY IMPORTANT, ESPECIALLY IN UNCERTAIN AND RAPIDLY CHANGING TIMES LIKE THESE, THAT WE TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT THE LANDSCAPE IN FRONT OF US AND TRY TO ANTICIPATE THE KINDS OF ISSUES AND TRENDS THAT MAY BE SHAPING OUR COLLECTIVE FUTURES. A BEND IN THE ROAD IS NOT THE END OF THE ROAD UNLESS YOU FAIL TO MAKE THE TURN." — KEVIN OCHSNER

anticipating challenges, aligning your goals and then acting can be the path to success.

"I think it's critically important, especially in uncertain and rapidly changing times like these, that we take a good look at the landscape in front of us and try to anticipate the kinds of issues and trends that may be shaping our collective futures," he said. "A bend in the road is not the end of the road unless you fail to make the turn."

With the end of 2020 closing in, Ochsner references a quote by Captain Sullenberger, the pilot known for landing U.S. Airways Flight 1549 in the Hudson River. Ochsner said, like Sullenberger, he remains a "long-term optimist and short-term realist" about the future of the beef industry.

"There are some hurdles and some things that we are going to have to navigate in the next year depending on the economy and the employment rate, but long-term, I think we are in a really good space," he said. "People have tasted and had an experience at retail that they are going to demand in the future, and I think that is very positive news for the beef industry and the Angus breed specifically."



From creating new habits in the kitchen to optimism on the trade front, Ochsner said much of the beef industry's hope lies in cracking open foreign market opportunities. There producers must anticipate, align and act upon their goals to move their operations further and take advantage of available resources.

Napoleon said, "Nothing is more difficult, and therefore, more precious, than to be able to decide." Ochsner's challenge to producers, even in time of ambiguity and uncertainty, is to confidently call the ball and decide. **A**

Editor's note: Kevin Ochsner's keynote presentation was sponsored by Zoetis.