

# ASSOCIATION INSIGHTS

*Reflecting on a successful year provides momentum for Angus entities in 2022.*

*by Julie Mais, editor*

Leaders of the American Angus Association's four entities spoke with Association CEO Mark McCully at the 2021 National Angus Convention & Trade Show to discuss recent successes and plans for the year.

## **ANGUS GENETICS INC.**

The longstanding partnership between the Association membership and staff is what drives the Angus genetic evaluation forward, said Kelli Retallick-Riley, who took the helm as president of Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI) in June 2021.

"People in this room, all the information, all the data that they commit as a collaborative effort to come together and really try to keep driving this straight forward is just remarkable every day," she said. "But one of the things that we really want to ensure at AGI is that when individuals think about 'where should I go get a genetic prediction for Angus cattle?' we want the number one answer to always be the American Angus Association's genetic evaluation, and we then want to come to AGI. If it's not driven by this American Angus Association database, it's not the best."

To reach this goal, Retallick-Riley said it will take continued data collection and submission by Angus breeders and AGI providing them and their customers tools.

"We're going to use every sort of innovation and research to try to get



American Angus Association CEO, Mark McCully, sat down with leaders of the American Angus Association's four entities. Pictured (from left) are McCully; Kelli Retallick Riley, president of Angus Genetics Inc.; John Stika, president of Certified Angus Beef; Thomas Marten, executive director of the Angus Foundation; and Brett Spader, president of Angus Media.

us there," she said.

One of those tools AGI is working on is sustained cow fertility and characterizing cattle from a maternal efficiency standpoint.

"Basically we're looking at this productive life tool, just how good those cows are at coming back, getting bred, and then how do we fit that into maternal weaned calf value, because we know that's an economic goal for you," Retallick-Riley said.

## **ANGUS MEDIA**

Angus Media President Brett Spader said both print and digital media continue to help Angus breeders market their programs and provide education and information.

Last year Angus Media produced a record number of sale books,

printed more pages of education for commercial bull buyers through the *Angus Beef Bulletin* and tripled the number of digital ad campaigns.

"That's the direct result of the trust that the membership has placed in our team and our desire to serve them as we create over 200 million touchpoints between buyers and sellers of Angus genetics," Spader said. "That's such a powerful thing when it comes to breed promotion and information and education."

Spader said successful marketing will continue to balance print along with digital and social media.

"We continue to find those integrated strategies that are perfectly customized for each individual producer to really get to the point of what they're trying to do,



in terms of their goals over the long period of time,” he said.

At convention, Angus Media launched a new technology, Xtended Reality, which focuses on the conversion of print to digital consumption.

“It creates 3D and immersive video experiences in the camera viewfinder of your phone,” Spader said. “It’s another great way to tell your Angus story, and of course, that’s what we strive to do on behalf of everyone here.”

## **CERTIFIED ANGUS BEEF**

Growing consumer trust is what the *Certified Angus Beef* (CAB) team focuses on each day.

“CAB is constantly trying to position the positive reality that we all live every day with that consumer to drive trust,” said John Stika, CAB president.

He said the beef industry is inherently complex, and the consumer has a lot to sort through at the meatcase.

“We believe our job as the brand is to consistently make that choice easier for the consumer,” he said. “What it comes down to is really a focus this last year, maybe it took us 40 years to figure it out, but to really simplify it right down to what the consumer really needs to know to make the right choice. In our opinion, the right choice is Certified Angus Beef.”

He shared CAB’s new slogan already showing up on brand promotion: “If it’s not certified, it’s not the best.™”

Up and down the supply chain, it has resonated, Stika said.

“Whether it’s communicating to the consumer or communicating

to the end user, our partner, our retail stores and restaurateurs, that brand promises it’s going to be the best-tasting, it’s going to be the best-selling and it’s going to be the best-sourced product that you’re going to find in the marketplace,” he said. “That’s the brand promise.”

From a supply outlook, coming off of the second highest sales year on record at 1.215 billion pounds of CAB, Stika said they expect continued success in sales moving forward.

“There’s a maintenance of business in retail, there’s surging momentum in foodservice and international markets, and our Prime product had a record year, as well as value-added products as well,” he added.

Stika also shared the need to respond to frequent requests from brand customers to validate environmental stewardship and cattle care. The brand set a long-range goal of marketing product under a “sustainably raised” label by 2025. Separate from that goal, Stika also shared a collaboration with Ducks Unlimited (read more on page 62) to help the brand leverage conservation work already happening on farms and ranches and using that data to meet customer needs.

## **ANGUS FOUNDATION**

The Angus family continues its legacy of generosity. Thomas Marten, Angus Foundation executive director, shared highlights from the past year and opportunities for Angus Foundation programs.

The Talon Internship program continues to grow in scope and influence. Cam Cooper’s estate gift provides internship opportunities for young people to work for host farms and ranches across the country.

“To have mentors that are helping these young people to have an understanding of how to stay relevant, how to get out there and be leaders within the breed is such a vital thing to have,” Marten said.

The program will offer seven host sites in 2022.

New in 2021, on May 17 to celebrate the first Angus bulls arriving to Victoria, Kan., from Scotland, the Angus Foundation launched the Angus Day of Giving.

“If you got on Facebook the evening of May 17, and you know any Angus breeder, chances are you saw a flood of stories of people sharing their experience of impact, either having participated in [an Angus Foundation-sponsored] program or knowing someone who’s grown through a program,” Marten said. “To see those stories shared so widely, coupled with folks’ generosity, gifts ranging anywhere from \$5 to \$500, we actually raised \$14,000 for the Angus Fund on the Day of Giving.”

The Angus Foundation Board has focused on unrestricted funds and unrestricted giving. Marten shared that 4% of the Angus Foundation’s overall net assets are unrestricted, meaning those funds can be used in a way where the need is greatest. Restricted funds, on the other hand, are from a donor gifting funds for an intended purpose.

“[Unrestricted funds] are something that we fundraise for every single year,” Marten said. “So we can support our juniors, so we can support things like Angus University and the Beef Leaders Institute, and we can fund some academic research to answer some of the needs, not only that you all have as breeders, but ultimately also for your customers.” 