

from the office

LEAD IN

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Each year at the Angus association annual meeting and during Board of Directors meetings, I am impressed with the leaders in the Angus industry—and with the democratic procedures which result in the election of the delegates to the annual meeting and their election of directors and officers.

Outstanding leaders, elected through a representative democratic process, account for much of the strength and growth of the association through the years. And it is something we should be dedicated to preserving.

Leadership is important to all levels of Angus business and the beef industry as well. Agriculture needs good leaders, not because we are seeking any kind of unfair advantage in our business but to insure that agriculture gets a fair shake and the opportunity to continue to produce food that is vital not only to consumers but to the survival of our national economy.

Requirements

Sacrifice, foresight, intestinal fortitude and the ability to look beyond one's self-interest are just some of the requirements of a leader. One of the most difficult jobs leaders in any industry face is to look beyond the present situation to envision long-term needs, then put programs into action to achieve them. This sometimes results in decisions that are initially unpopular even though they are necessary for survival and meaningful long-term achievement.

Leaders who make long-term decisions have the responsibility of studying, in detail, all circumstances of a situation before making a decision. Then, once that



decision is made, they must be willing to stand behind it until the decision has had time to prove or disprove itself.

It is inevitable that mistakes will be made by any decision-making group. And when these mistakes are obvious, then change must be made.

Detractors

On the other hand, it is just as inevitable that most decisions will have their detractors. The decision to begin a performance records program in the 1950s and the decision to open up the artificial insemination rules in the late 1960s are good examples. Frequently detractors do not look at the total picture, nor are they aware of all the factors that went into a decision. That's the reason good leaders must study each issue

thoroughly, then not be unduly influenced by later criticism.

The Angus association has been deeply committed to promoting good leadership in the Angus business and in the beef cattle industry as well. In June of 1981, for example, we will sponsor our third Angus Leadership Conference in St. Joseph for the presidents and secretaries of all local, state or regional Angus associations. The last such leadership conference was in June 1978. The Angus breed also has sponsored a number of junior leadership conferences to build future industry leaders. The new National Junior Angus Assn. also is designed as a leadership-building organization.

Many Levels

The Angus industry functions on many levels, and it is not just the national level that needs good leadership. Each Angus organization, no matter how small or large, has the potential for strong impact on the demand for Angus cattle and future growth of the breed. Each Angus association, no matter its size, has its own unique character, because every association is made up of individuals with common interests, goals and needs.

The success of the Angus business in the years ahead depends to a great extent on sound active organizations and constructive leadership at all levels. I urge you to actively support your local, state, regional and national organizations with your time and dollars. With the cooperation of every serious Angus breeder, we can maximize our efficiency and growth in the years ahead and insure a place for our children and grandchildren in the Angus business for many years to come. 