



**Executive Vice President,
American Angus Association**



In December cattle producers delivered more than 900 head of Angus-sired feeder steers to Decatur County Feed Yard in Oberlin, Kan., to begin the Certified Angus Beef Feedlot Gain and Carcass Contest.

The contest is important for many reasons. It will introduce many commercial cattle producers to the specifications for Certified Angus Beef. It will allow breeders a chance to promote Angus bulls that sire some of the winners. It should generate interest in the CAB program nationwide among cattle producers, feeders and packers. It will allow some breeder to take home \$5,000 in cash for entering the winning pen of five steers and \$2,500 for the reserve champion pen, plus other prizes for having cattle that meet CAB specs. And, it will introduce many commercial producers to retained ownership and tell them whether or not it might be profitable for them.

But maybe more important than everything else, the program will demonstrate that the American Angus Association and Angus cattle breeders are still serious about carcass traits. It will help us show the world that we are determined to produce high quality, high yielding beef that meets the demands of a high percentage of today's consumers.

The Angus breed is one of the few breeds that has believed over the years that quality in beef is particularly important. We are also one of the few breeds that has continued to collect carcass data on cattle and use that information in our performance records program. Angus is the only breed in the United States to publish carcass EPDs. in our national Sire Evaluation Report and probably the only breed to have the information available on active bulls.

This fact was brought home to me recently in a meeting with representatives of other breeds and the industry. More than once the Angus breed was referred to for having continued to collect and publish carcass data on our breed and develop EPDs. The meeting was specifically about carcass EPD research for the industry as a whole, and to seek potential funding for the project.

In the industry today there is plenty of talk about EPD research and genome mapping for identifying gene members for carcass traits. Most important, the industry is well aware of the needs that exist to improve carcass merit and NCA's Value Based Marketing Taskforce identified carcass research as a high priority for the industry. In the meantime, the Angus breed has not dropped the ball and has continued to evaluate sires for carcass traits for the past twenty years – the old-fashioned way, by progeny testing.

Collecting meaningful carcass data is neither inexpensive or easy. Cattle have to be individually identified with that identity maintained through the packing plant. Each carcass must be individually evaluated and that evaluation written down and put into the Association's data base. Unless new mechanical evaluation measures for live cattle are developed, this procedure will continue and it may keep some breeds from pursuing carcass EPDs. It's for these reasons that new procedures are continually being reviewed and, in time, maybe greater numbers of bulls will be included in our carcass information data bases.

Angus breeders are to be congratulated for their persistence over the years. The time will soon come, if it's not here already, when this dedication will pay off for the breeders who have been involved, and for the Angus breed as a whole.

