

Lead In

by Richard Spader, executive vice president



Resolve to further strengthen the Angus business in 2000

The new year is destined to be a good one for Angus activity if business in October and November are reliable barometers. The first two months of fiscal year (FY) 2000 show a marked increase in all categories of activity — registrations, transfers, and regular and junior memberships issued.

Registered Angus auction sales this past fall have been a rewarding experience for most members. All this reflects an increase in the widespread respect for Angus cattle by commercial cattlemen across the country and more general acceptance of their profit-making potential.

Even though we can look to 2000 with a great deal of optimism, I want to discuss various efforts underway at the American Angus Association office to increase all Angus activity. At the same time, I want to encourage you to join in the concentrated Association effort to boost Angus business and to further enhance the use of Angus cattle, both registered and commercial.

On a daily basis we mail personal letters to all nonmember buyers of Angus cattle who have had at least one animal transferred to them. The letter encourages them to become members of the Association and to become more involved in Association and Angus activities.

This mailing to nonmember buyers totals more than 100 people on any given day and more than 2,500 a month. It represents tremendous potential for new activity. During the past year, a total of 1,342 cattle producers became members after receiving this letter.

The nonmember-buyers list represents the thousands of commercial cattlemen who had registered Angus bulls transferred to them. Four times a year — in January, March, August and October — the *Angus*

Beef Bulletin is mailed to the 73,000 readers who have had at least one registered Angus bull transferred to them in the past three years. These cattlemen receive the *Angus Beef Bulletin* free of charge and remain on the mailing list as long as registered animals continue to be transferred to them.

The *Angus Beef Bulletin* has become one of the great promotional pieces available to inform the commercial industry about programs of the Association and of the Certified Angus Beef (CAB) Program that can help improve the bottom line for producers. And it's made possible by your transfer of ownership of registered Angus.

Another letter goes to life members who become inactive because they have not registered cattle for three consecutive years.

About 25% of our members are life members, and the remaining 75% are annual dues-paying or regular members. Life membership was discontinued in 1980. The letter explains the benefits of registering cattle, of keeping their registrations up-to-date and of being an active member of the Association.

In addition, we conduct surveys of inactive members to determine why they have become inactive and to learn how we can help keep them in the registered Angus business. We use all this information to help keep the loss of members and the loss of Angus business to a minimum.

The Association also sponsors a membership incentive program for all active members. The program offers prizes to members who recruit new producers into the ranks of the Association. This past year a total of 188 members participated and brought in 481 new memberships.

We also work hard at encouraging junior members who turn 21 years of age to

become active adult members. About one out of five junior members join the adult ranks. During their time as junior members, they receive two annual issues of *Directions*, a newsletter specifically designed for junior members, and two youth-oriented issues of the *Angus Journal*, one in the spring and one in the fall.

In other correspondence with potential members we are explaining the value of the *Angus Journal* and why everyone who is involved with the Angus business, registered and commercial, should be receiving it. The *Journal* is a strong selling point for membership in the Association.

You, too, can take an active role in beefing up the Angus business and the strength of your Association. When you sell cattle to nonmembers, you might find it a good public-relations move to buy them a regular or junior membership. At least supply them with a membership request form and explain the advantages of becoming a member.

One of the strongest selling points for membership is that they will receive the *Angus Journal*. Of course, they are also eligible to enroll in the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) program.

Be sure to get these people involved as soon as possible in your local and state Angus associations. People who become involved are more likely to be a success and to be long-term members of our business.

The American Angus Association has accepted the challenge in 2000 to increase business activity and the strength of the Angus breed. This challenge is not just for the Association staff and its officers and directors. The Association is you. Without your interest and support we cannot fully achieve our goals as we strive to improve on our No. 1 status in the industry.

Richard J. Spader

