



# Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

## Realize your herd's full potential

*One of my college professors at the University of Missouri once told me that, in general, seedstock producers were far better at selecting genetics than at managing cattle. His point was that while genetic selection might be the fun part of being in the seedstock business, it is a waste of effort to produce high-powered bulls and females unless you manage them to realize their genetic potential.*

### Timing

To put the discussion into context, it took place in the mid-80s. Continental cattle were becoming very popular and Angus breeders were trying to add size and scale to the breed.

As my professor pointed out, what good does it do to select for more growth and milking ability if you're going to put the cows out on unimproved, endophyte-infected fescue pastures? It's kind of like asking a Kentucky Derby winner to run laps around your calving barn.

There's no doubt we're focusing on more traits now than we did back then. Yet, I don't recall having bulls around with 100-pound (lb.) expected progeny differences (EPDs) for yearling weight or 30-lb. EPDs for milk.

We are a lot smarter about matching a cow to her environment, and the diversity of the Angus gene pool gives us the ability to target the EPD profiles that will work with resources available in our areas.

We know that our job as seedstock producers is to design the cow that will most

effectively harvest our resources while producing a calf that will yield the most desired beef in a grocery store or restaurant.

We know that.

But it is still more fun to talk about what herd sire we're going to use this spring than it is to talk about how many pounds of nitrogen we need to apply to pastures.

### Hot commodity

Competition for land may force us to change our priorities. We've long lamented the inflated prices of scenic areas. Remote areas once thought fit only for cows are now prime land for developers and businessmen and women wanting homes in the country to get away from high-stress corporate jobs. The prices they are willing to pay make it hard to justify running cows.

Even wooded areas in northeast Missouri are selling for phenomenal prices to folks wanting a bit of hunting ground where they can escape to on weekends.

Commercials on television are touting real estate as the best investment available. It's true, they aren't making any more land.

But they said that in the 80s, too, and land prices did fall. Right or wrong, fair or not, it is reality.

We can't give up and say it's cheaper to raise cattle in Brazil, Argentina or Mexico. Former Association president Leroy Baldwin provided a good example of why that's the case. He recalls when Hurricane Andrew destroyed Florida's lime crop. Before the storm, Mexico was selling limes to the United States for \$8 per box; afterward, Mexico increased the price of limes to \$24 per box.

Especially in troubled times, it is critical that we maintain a domestic food supply.

### Our responsibility

For us and especially for our commercial customers to continue making a living raising cow-calf pairs, we're going to have to get more out of our land resource. We're going to have to start thinking in terms of net value of beef produced.

That will require learning more about both sides of the equation — the land that produces the product we raise and the cow that we use to harvest it.

We hope this issue, focused on grazing strategies, sparks some ideas to help you realize the genetic potential of your herd and increase the productivity of your resources.

E-MAIL: [shermel@angusjournal.com](mailto:shermel@angusjournal.com)

### ANGUS PRODUCTIONS INC.

3201 Frederick Ave., Saint Joseph, MO 64506-2997  
phone: 1-800-821-5478; fax: (816) 233-6575  
office hours: (M-F) 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (Central time)  
home page: [www.angusjournal.com](http://www.angusjournal.com) ■ Staff are listed by name, phone extension and e-mail prefix. All direct phone numbers are "(816) 383-5..."; all e-mail addresses are "...@angusjournal.com"

**General manager**—Terry Cotton, 214, tcotton

**Editorial Department**—Editor, Shauna Rose Hermel, 270, shermel ■ Assistant Editors, Corinne Blender, 277, cblender, & Stephanie Veldman, 215, sveldman; ■ Artists, Christy Benigno & Mary Black ■ Proofreader, Lucille Standlee

**Field editors**—Kindra Gordon, 609 Deerfield Court, Spearfish, SD 57783, (605) 722-7699, kindras@gordonresources.com ■ Janet Mayer, 259 Mile Hill Rd., Johnstown, PA 15909, (814) 322-4687, jmayer5013@aol.com ■ Becky Mills, Rt. 1, Box 414, Cuthbert, GA 31740, (229) 732-6748, lovettmills@alltel.net ■ Troy Smith, HC 72, Box 18A, Sargent, NE 68874, (308) 527-3483, wordsmith@nctc.net

**Contributing writer**—Barb Baylor Anderson, T.S. Gatz, Steve Leer, Raylene Nickel, Lisa Solomon

**Advertising/Production Department**—Manager, Cheryl Oxley, 216, coxley ■ Advertising assistants, Doneta Brown, 289, dbrown, & Rich Masoner, 223, rmasoner ■ Production assistant, Carol Beckett, 226, cbeckett ■ Advertising artists, Susan Bomar, Monica Ford & Julie Seitz-Aud ■ Advertising proofreader, Jacque McGinness

**Special Services Department**—Coordinator, Sharon Mayes, 221, smayes ■ Assistant, Vickie Whitsell ■ Artist, Janet Herkelman ■ Proofreader, Linda Robbins

**Web Marketing Department**—Director, Angie Denton, 211, adenton ■ Assistants, Tanya Peebles, 234, tpeebles, & Abra Ungeheuer, 239, abra ■ Artist, Ray Palermo

**Photo Department**—Coordinator, Donna Conley, 217, dconley ■ Digital imaging specialist, Kathrin Gresham

**Circulation coordinator**—LaVera Spire, 220, lspire

**Network systems coordinator**—Bruce Buntin

**Office assistant**—Lauralee West

