

by Allen Moczygemba
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You are what you do

In December I covered a lot of country. While I can't tell you exactly how many miles I traveled, I can tell you that I was on 17 flights between Dec. 1 and Dec. 22. And yes, in case you're wondering, I was home for Christmas.

While most folks think life slows down a bit during the holiday season, that's not the case when you're in the Angus business.

Following Angus Convention in early November in Columbus, Ohio, we immediately headed to Louisville, Ky., for the North American International Livestock Expo (NAILE). Following Louisville, the fall sale season resumed in both the southeast and out west before picking up across the rest of the country. And of course, there's a number of annual state association meetings as well.

Common elements

I share this with you as a preface for the theme of this issue which focuses on tips for getting into and, ultimately, succeeding in the Angus business. As I travel across the country, I see the same attributes repeatedly when it comes to folks enjoying success in this business.

First, these producers have an uncanny ability to pay attention to detail. They're obsessed with every detail about their operation and particularly the data they collect and submit to the American Angus Association. In fact, I would suggest the amount of data collected and

utilized is directly correlated to the level of success an operation enjoys.

Second, while you're in the cattle business, you're also in the people business. Your word matters just as the cattle that you raise and ultimately sell matter. I often reference the importance of building a brand, but none have a more consummate sense of branding than a cattle operation. Both literally and figuratively. It's not just the quality of the cattle that you raise but it's also the comfort that your customers have in knowing that you'll back the performance of the cattle you sell with your reputation.

Third, there's this thought — misguided in my opinion — that the cattle business is a lifestyle business. More often than not, it's not a lifestyle — it's your life. It's seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. Holidays are reserved for the hired help, not you or your family. At a certain stage of your life, the family summer vacation destination is determined by the location of the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS). But if you think about it, that's also a position of privilege in that you are what you do. Not many folks are fortunate enough to be in that position. Particularly in today's modern world, most folks are not

able to include their family within their occupation.

Finally, the purebred cattle business isn't for the faint of heart. There are incredible highs after winning a show or hosting your annual production sale. But those highs may be followed by frustrating lows such as when drought forces you to liquidate some of your herd or a genetic condition negatively impacts your breeding program through a parentage issue that was out of your control.

Having said all that, none of you would change places if you could. Your lives are centered around your faith, your family and the Angus cattle that you raise. As I said, you're fortunate in that you are what you do. And, that's a good place to be in life.

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