

FOUNDATION IN FOCUS

by Rod Schoenbine, Angus Foundation

Investing in Innovation

“The stone age didn’t end because we ran out of stones.” — Unknown

Constant innovation is necessary for progress. Angus breeders experience that every year as they anxiously await the proof of new matings and breeding decisions. Innovative use of novel genetics and new technology or implementing original techniques and tactics in production and marketing are essential for our business success. Efficiency of production and competition for market share are what drive our industry’s and our operation’s innovative thinking.

What is innovation anyway?

A distinct difference exists between invention and innovation, though many times they are closely linked. Science and research play an essential role in invention with new discoveries of molecules or combinations of elements. How we apply those discoveries and create value for society however is where we get true innovation.

For example, we in the cattle industry are benefiting from the science and research discoveries from the 2003 Human Genome Project, where scientists first successfully mapped a genome. The scientific discoveries from that project have yielded innovative diagnostic and animal breeding tools which allow us in agriculture to

raise healthier, more sustainable and economical products.

True designed discovery has led us to innovations such as self-driving cars, airplanes and smartphones; but the daily practice of innovation also brought us sticky notes and chocolate chip cookies. What if we focused less on the big inventions and more on the steps we can take every day to get there? If we only focus on innovation through grand designed ideas, we’re missing out on the idea of continuous improvement by you and me and the major impact it has on individuals, companies and our industry. Whether intentional or not, innovations have changed the world we live in.

What does it take?


The more I read about innovative icons, two essential character traits surface. Many are keen observers of their environment, and all have a creative curiosity. Innovation is happening all around us; all we have to do is see it.

As Nobel Prize Biochemist Dr. Albert Szent-Györgyi said, “Innovation is seeing what everyone has seen and thinking what no one has thought.” Observation is the key first step. Observing a problem or situation then applying creative thinking and problem-solving skills

are ingredients necessary for a valuable innovative solution.

Foundation focus

Your Angus Foundation’s mission, ‘Supporting youth, education and research for the betterment of the Angus Breed and the agricultural industry,’ is focused on innovation for the future of the Angus breed. Concentrating on youth and educational programs that inspire curious observers, creative thinkers and passionate Angus breeders is its goal. Along with innovative research projects focused on the current and future needs of the Angus breed, your investment in the Angus Foundation is sure to yield our industry’s future icons of innovation.

As Dow Chemical pointed out in their blockbuster ad campaign, “The one element that is the catalyst for innovation is the human element.” As the cattle industry progresses with innovative solutions to the challenges ahead, one way you can support Angus innovation is by investing in the Angus Foundation. Consider donating at www.angusfoundation.org. 



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