

from the office

LEAD IN

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The following text is the executive vice president's annual report presented to the delegates at the annual membership meeting of the American Angus Assn. in Denver on Jan. 15, 1980.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to report to you some of the accomplishments of the 1979 fiscal year of the American Angus Assn. This has truly been a banner year for the association in almost every area. I think it is important to note that, although 1979 was a great year, many of the things that have been accomplished should have even greater impact in the 1980s.

I won't cover every detail because the chairman of each board committee will report in more depth, but I will outline some of our greater achievements and try to put them in perspective. I approach this task very humbly, because I am just a small cog in this very large machine.

I think the real credit goes to the Board of Directors and to the outstanding dedication and ability of all of our employees—from the association receptionist and telephone operator through the clerical help, the staff and the field representatives.

The Board

First of all, the Board of Directors donate their time, and it requires a great deal more time than a lot of breeders realize. Keep in mind these are busy men. Most of them have major investments in agriculture at home, and the time they donate is at the sacrifice of their own business. In spite of their widespread interests, when they meet or confer, they give their undivided attention to association matters and try to determine all of the ramifications of a decision before it's made.

The second group that is responsible for our success is the staff. Their expertise, training, dedication and just good old hard work have been called upon to put the policy decisions of the board into practice

and give us the kind of year we just experienced.

I sincerely believe the American Angus Assn. has the most talented staff that has ever been assembled by a breed organization. This staff is an appropriate mix of experience, longevity, geographic origin and background. To the man (or woman), their dedication is unquestioned, and I believe their accomplishments speak for themselves. In my opinion, there is no substitute for dedicated directors and outstanding employees.

Banner Year

As I said, 1979 was a banner year for the American Angus Assn. in many ways. For you, as individual Angus breeders, 1979 brought the most welcome news in years—greatly improved prices. This upturn was not a modest one. The demand for Angus cattle pushed the average price of all Angus sold at auction to record highs, averaging \$1,720 on bulls and \$1,096 on females. Just a year earlier we had averaged only \$1,057 on bulls and just \$703 on females.

Our cattle are in stronger demand because of their fertility, their productivity and their marketability. Angus cattle are trouble-free cattle that year in and year out will give you a return on your investment.

One reason our cattle are in stronger demand is that Angus breeders are putting more emphasis on breed improvement every year. This was highlighted by the fact that new AHIR activity hit an all-time record high during the past fiscal year. We processed 84,563 weaning weights in AHIR and 36,176 yearling weights for a total of 129,739 weights. This represented an overall increase of 5.5%. Yearling weights processed were up nearly 9% this past year. An example of AHIR growth is that South Dakota alone had more AHIR weights processed in 1979 than the number of weights processed by Angus breeders all over the United States in 1965.

Last year for the first time ever, we were

able to mail the National Angus Sire Evaluation report and the Pathfinder Cow report to all members of the American Angus Assn. This means that some 40,000 cattlemen and livestock leaders knew about these programs last year and had access to the reports compared to only 2,000 or fewer just the year before. This access should lead to greater understanding and eventually greater breed improvement.

Last year we also published the association's first A.I. Sire Listing. This listing featured more than 200 Angus bulls that were available for use artificially. This list was published in the ANGUS BULLETIN and mailed to more than 40,000 cattlemen. And it too will now be a yearly feature in the ANGUS JOURNAL. Again, this accomplishment in my mind is extremely important. It makes the A.I. market more available to Angus breeders, and it will result in a greater number of bulls being used, which will preserve the broad genetic base that has been so important in the improvement of the Angus breed.

Angus breeders chalked up substantial gains in registrations, transfers and new members joining the association in 1979. These business gains are directly attributable to improved demand for Angus cattle. One trend that began last year and is particularly evident early in the 1980 fiscal year is the sharp increase in new members joining the association. For the first three months of 1980, the number of new Angus herds being started (as indicated by new life memberships) is up nearly 50% from the same period a year ago.

ANGUS JOURNAL

One of the major milestones of the past year was the acquisition by the association of the ANGUS JOURNAL and its subsequent distribution to every Angus household in the nation. Until July of 1979, the association had no monthly communication going out to all its members. Now,

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each month, every Angus breeder has access to news and information about Angus events and activities—information that can help them do better jobs of breeding cattle and improving their herds. Receiving the JOURNAL also makes them feel more a part of the largest beef breed association in the world and lets them know that our association is growing and improving and providing service to all its members.

To accomplish this wasn't a simple task, because there was no blueprint to follow. Because we have nearly double the membership of any other beef breed association, it meant putting out a magazine with nearly double the circulation of any other beef breed publication. That costs a great deal of money. But the ANGUS JOURNAL staff and Board of Directors have succeeded. We have the largest breed publication in the country, the highest quality breed publication in the country and the breed publication with the lowest cost per thousand advertising rate in the country. The tremendous distribution of this publication should have a dramatic impact on future demand for Angus cattle and the level of expertise among Angus breeders.

Another major accomplishment was stepped-up advertising in 1979. In the face of inflation and rising costs on every front, the Board of Directors approved an advertising budget increase of nearly one-third for the year and pledged themselves to dip into reserve funds, if necessary, to maintain it. They felt strongly about the need for an effective widespread Angus advertising program at the time when people were starting to expand herds, and the dramatic increase in the volume of Angus cattle relative to other breeds indicated this was a wise decision. Because of improved Angus business, we were able to increase our advertising and promotion spending, yet still maintain a balanced association budget.

During the year our print advertising program won regional honors from the American Advertising Federation, and we introduced a new radio advertising program featuring Leroy Van Dyke that I personally believe is one of the best farm radio campaigns I have ever heard.

At the close of the 1979 fiscal year, we had Angus breeders from 39 states participating in our cooperative advertising program. This plan has allowed individual breeders to improve their advertising at very little cost to them and has greatly increased Angus advertising in publications all over the United States.

Multiple Application Form

To introduce all association members to the ease of using the multiple application form, we made two mailings of these forms to every member during the past year. We now have a lot more breeders regularly using the simple form, and there is no doubt that this helped increase our registrations during the year.

To encourage participation in the AHIR program, we also mailed to every breeder who registered more than five calves a copy of the AHIR calving and weaning report form. The form had all the calves listed so that all a breeder needed to do to get on the AHIR program was fill in the weaning weight information and return it to the association. These programs are just the start of a trend, because we are dedicated to developing a registration and AHIR system that will not require duplicate breeder input.

A new computer was installed in order to improve service to Angus members. This computer will make greater service available to Angus breeders and was necessary because our previous computer (in computer lingo) was two generations out of date, which means it was obsolete and the maintenance cost was becoming excessive.

Conference

We had a highly successful National Angus Outlook Conference in Ft. Collins, Colo., despite the fact it fell at the time when the gasoline shortage scare was at its height.

The Certified Angus Beef program did not get released by USDA until April 2 of 1979. In the short run, that red tape experience set the CAB program back; but in

the long run, it was something that probably had to be dealt with anyway. And the CAB program has really taken off since its approval. There are currently six stores merchandising CAB, and the volume they are selling is increasing at a dramatic rate.

In junior activities, we started our job program, laid the groundwork for forming a National Junior Angus Assn. this coming July, revised and reinstated the Junior Angus Recognition Program and had three very successful junior Angus shows.

In addition to these accomplishments, the Angus association has worked hard at improving our image within the beef industry. This is the cattleman's breed and we feel we have taken great strides in having it recognized as so.

Supported NCA

We have actively supported NCA, encouraged Angus breeders to get involved in local, state and national cattlemen's associations, and we have tried to represent our breeders' ideas to legislators, industry groups and the public. In this we have supported and raised funds for the Beefeferendum and took strong positions to protect our export hide market and to repeal the carryover tax basis.

Yes, it has been a busy year. A good year. A year that should help propel the Angus breed into even greater prominence in the future.

We have had some setbacks, but when you are making accomplishments, some

setbacks are inevitable. We have a diverse group of breeders who raise Angus cattle for numerous sound valid reasons. All Angus breeders will never have the same outlook or the same goals, but we will continue to try and work with each and every one of them.

I think Angus breeders have a right to be proud of the size, scope, impact, emphasis and service of the American Angus Assn. I assure you that I'll continue to work to make our association even better and to have the Angus breed recognized as the best beef breed in the world. 