



**Executive Vice President,  
American Angus Association**



**A** recent check-off-funded “industry information” project produced good news for Angus breeders. Cholesterol in beef, it reported, does not increase as the levels of marbling increase. The research project conducted at Kansas State University was administered for the Beef Board by the National Cattlemen’s Foundation.

In a nutshell, the findings indicate there is no change in cholesterol content as marbling varies in different cuts or grades. And, cholesterol content is not affected by the type of grain fed to cattle.

At a time when all consumers, ourselves included, are more health conscious and each breed strives to establish a position in the industry, this research supports a growing list of advantages for Angus cattle.

First, we know that marbling provides a certain “insurance” of eating quality so for the health-conscious consumer, it’s rewarding to know that well-marbled, tasty beef can also be consumed with little risk or concern. Second, we know that Angus are looked upon in the industry as the breed most likely to add marbling to the end product, so it is the best of all worlds for our industry.

The research set out to determine if feeding or other management practices affected the cholesterol content of beef. The findings confirm previous studies indicating that the cholesterol content of lean tissue does not increase as marbling increases. This means that consumers can select “higher quality” beef without fear of consuming additional dietary cholesterol.

It was also noted in the research that the cholesterol content of a cut of beef can be reduced by trimming the external and seam fat. But the research went on to say, once the external fat is removed, there is no significant difference in cholesterol content as the intramuscular fat or marbling varies. It was also noted that various types of grain in the animals’ diets had no effect on cholesterol content of the beef cuts.

While this is good news for our business, it still remains our challenge to maintain marbling quality in our cattle while reducing the waste fat of the live animal and carcass. Efforts continue through carcass evaluation to identify the sires and lines of cattle that will do just that. One of the challenges we all have, as an industry, breeders and the Association, is to define the ways to most effectively identify carcass value in the future.

