MELISSA BUSH MEETS THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

Melissa Bush, National Junior Angus Association member from Britton, SD., is ready to take on the challenges of representing the American Angus Association as 1993 Miss American Angus.

Melissa is an 18-year-old freshman at South Dakota State University. She is the daughter of Jim and Carol Bush. Her family raise and show Angus cattle and have been active leaders in the South Dakota Angus Association. She owns 11 registered cows, three yearling replacement heifers and two steers.

Melissa earned first place in the South Dakota Angus Auxiliary scholarship prograam and went on to earn third place scholarship from the American Angus Auxiliary. A strong interest in science, a love of animals, and the courage to take on today's industry challenges make this young Angus enthusiast a force to be reckoned with.

Here is her speech presented at the Miss American Angus contest in Louisville, KY., last November.

This is a part of a conversation you might have heard in my home recently:

Alright, who's the wise guy that got out all these old pictures ? And just so happened to leave this really dandy one of me laying on top of the cheap! Hmm was I cool or just funny looking???? Take a look at that mouth full of braces, and those great big "spooky" looking glasses. Get a load of that hair-do! I must have been heavy into my experimenting stage.

In those early years of junior high, it must have been an adventure to be associated with me. At that time of my life it was not a challenge to change, but certainly a challenge of change. There-in lies the adventure we call life.

Coming from a family that is deeply involved in producing breeding cattle for the commercial beef herds of the upper Midwest, I realized early in life that we truly were the starting point in the producing of red meat. I was always proud of that fact, and grew to better understand the importance of the seedstock producer and his ever changing breeding programs.

OOPs! There I go again! I'm getting ahead of myself and you in describing what I believe to be the challenge of change regarding the future in the beef

industry. The start and the end. My parents have informed me that those two areas are what I always seem to get most excited about. Mom says I was either starting a sibling fight or ending it, but seemed to be completely absent for the argument in between.

Yes, I do enjoy the thrill of the starting line and thrive on competition at the end. My involvement in showing Angus heifers and steers for 10 years has more than reinforced that part of my being.

Angus breeder and consumer... The start and the end.

These are two areas that I hope to be able to participate in and have an impact on in my future.

Me, an Angus breeder in the 21st century? Sure, the reasons might be (1) because of my background it would only be natural; (2) because I still see it as a male dominated profession; (3) because of the scientific changes possible in the advancement of our breed.

Yes, the answer is a combination of all three. With my keen interest in science, accented by a love of animals, and a sincere desire to be a part of the challenge; I look forward to the changes!

The cattle business is the largest segment of American agriculture. It accounts for more than 20 percent of all farm marketing receipts. The beef cattle industry is important because it does convert forages, roughages, and by-products not edible by man. Cattle convert these otherwise wasted products into a highly-digestible, nutritious protein source for the consumer.

The cattle breeder of the future will be selecting for the same economical traits in his cattle as present producers are doing right now. There will, however, be many more scientific tools to enable the breeder to become more accurate in this selection process. Scientific tools such as ultra-sound. This development allows the breeder to scan potential herd sires to determine the ribeye area and leanness of the animal. Since carcass traits are highly inheritable, using sires that yield the most desirable ultra-sound data will be a definite advantage to the Certified Angus Beef Program.

I believe another useful tool might be genetic engineering. With this we will be able to make our cattle the perfect size for efficiency and perhaps splice a gene for resistance to certain classes of disease.

Angus breeder and consumer — The start and the end. These are two areas that I hope to be able to participate in and have an impact on in my future.

-Melissa Bush

Present applications for DNA typing or fingerprinting in bovines is for parentage determination, multiple sire matings, embryo screening and permanent animal identification. In the future, the DNA molecule may provide us with a more accurate method of selecting for performance traits.

Curs is an ever changing world. The world of the Angus breeder is not any different. It will be changing and accelerating at a dizzying speed as we race to the 21st century. We will be using time-proven methods in unison with new and exciting scientific aids. This approach should enhance our ability to produce cattle that fit the needs of the cow-calf producer, the feeder, the packer, the retailer and most of all the consumer.

You want to get me really provoked, I mean downright mad?! Just say something about beef that is false. Everyone is allowed to have their own opinions, but it's when people talk without knowing all the facts that has a tendency to get me speaking faster than I am right now.

Common misconceptions about the value of beef in our diet is of major concern to all of us connected to the beef industry. There is a lot of room in the diets of Americans for more beef. Presently we only average 2 ounces of cooked beef per day — considerably less than the recommended daily intake of foods from the meat group. Today's beef is leaner. Consumers who want to cut down on calories, fat and cholesterol can do so without cutting down on the amount of beef they consume.

I see in the future the challenge we will have to keep our market share of the consumer's food dollar. Being a part of this activity is the competition at the end I so enjoy!

Angus breeder and consumer... The start and the end.

I hope to be active in both areas in the future. They present me with the challenge to change and the opportunity to participate in the challenge of change. The challenge to produce and promote a desirable product called beef — ANGUS BEEF.