

LEAD IN

by Richard L. Spader Executive Vice President
American Angus Association



Promote the Advantages of Angus Cattle

If imitation is the finest form of flattery, then Angus breeders should be impressed. Seldom in the past few decades have we seen anything catch on as fast as the effort to turn breeds of cattle black and polled.

There is good reason for this. Angus bulls and females sell at record prices, and the demand for Angus feeders, bred and open heifers, and finished cattle lead the market. No one wants to raise cattle that bring less money and it makes sense for some to get on the black bandwagon as quickly as possible.

Recent issues of more than one other breed publication are filled with black advertisements. If this trend continues and the pastures of America turn as black as I think they will, the challenge will intensify to differentiate Angus from the black impostors. It is a job for all producers and marketers of registered and commercial Angus cattle, as well as for your Association.

One of the Association's long-range objectives is to differentiate Angus from the other black breeds available to commercial cattlemen. To achieve this goal, we have to promote the advantages of Angus cattle. We must make it clear that Angus performance information is backed by the largest database in the world. These records, including our almost exclusive expected progeny differences (EPDs) for carcass merit, are an advantage that all of us have as Angus breeders when it comes to marketing our product. It also points out the importance of keeping and building your own within-herd database of performance information to use for both herd improvement and marketing.

No other breed today has the advantage of the largest end product marketing program in the world — the Certified Angus Beef Program. Projected sales for 1994 are 150 million pounds. Each month seems to set new

records. As the packer base grows for the CAB Program, all of you, and your commercial customers, have an opportunity to capitalize on the CAB Program and the demand it's building for Angus cattle. Continental breeds are having their problems. Results from the recent National Cattlemen's Association's Strategic Alliance program clearly point out that the eating quality of British cattle outpaced that of Continental cattle for palatability and acceptability by a professional taste panel. That means we need more Angus cattle to fill the needs of the CAB Program, not Continental cattle wrapped in black hides.

One other key advantage of the Angus breed is the large database of carcass information. Most breeds have little to none, and some have decided they just can't compete in this area. The industry is now focused on the importance of producing for end product specifications. This will be attained through the use of carcass EPDs. Last year alone more than 100 bulls were added to the growing list of Angus with carcass EPDs. Most bulls being used extensively in the industry have carcass EPDs or are in the process of being tested. For example, 15 of the top 20 bulls for registration in Fiscal 1993 have carcass EPDs. Carcass EPDs, along with production EPDs of growth and milk, are your best bet for breeding predictable, uniform Angus cattle and for marketing them to the commercial producer.

The next few years will offer some unique challenges for Angus breeders. But I know the Angus breed and its breeders. Our Angus advantages and programs will not be surpassed by the competition.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard L. Spader".