

Why Me?

BY ANNE SCHMALENBERGER

Editor's note: Each year at the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) in Louisville, Ky., five young women compete for the title of Miss American Angus. During the interview process each candidate is asked to give a five- to seven-minute speech on a preselected topic. Here you will find a copy of Anne Schmalenberger's speech that helped her earn the breed's top ambassador role.

I am an Angus breeder, and I'm proud of what I produce. I enjoy sharing my enthusiasm for Angus with others, and I would like to serve as Miss American Angus so I can further promote our great breed.

Strive for excellence. This is a guideline for my family and all we do. It is also a challenge held by the American Angus Association as we work for the best cattle. As we head toward a new millennium, the future will be lost on those who are not prepared. We must strive for excellence as we face three important challenges in the areas of promotion, education and involvement.

■ Promotion

Promotion of our cattle is vital. *Certified Angus Beef*[™] [product] has created so much demand for quality cattle in the past 20 years, but with current sales of more than a million pounds of *Certified Angus Beef* [product] every day and demand exceeding supply, there's no time to rest.

Richard Spader of the American Angus Association recently wrote that we "need to ... promote aggressively." In a time when we compete against other black, polled breeds, we need to let others know the outstanding characteristics of our cattle. From mothering abilities to marbling, Angus genetics are second to none.

The Association has made great strides in the information it offers to help breeders in their decision-making. I would like the opportunity to help promote and inform producers that they need to use Angus for better profits. We need to stress to our own breeders the important role they play and how they should also strive for excellence, not just for themselves, but for the breed as a whole.

From my various state leadership positions, I have had experience speaking to convention halls full of people. I hope to have the opportunity to express my opinions about Angus to large audiences. I can relate to cattlemen and women, because I, too, have checked cows for heat, vaccinated, sorted, driven a baler — and everything in between.

■ Education

Consumer education is also an intriguing challenge. Increasing our market share depends on what consumers choose as they reach into meat coolers and order from menus.

As a cattle producer, I've felt the need to educate consumers about the importance of beef in a healthy diet and to explain ways of ensuring a safe product for their tables.

When I worked to become an Iowa Beef Ambassador, I did promotions, wrote articles and gave speeches focusing on consumer education.

Yes, I'm an Angus breeder, but I feel a commitment to be sure that all consumers choose beef. As Miss American Angus, I would enjoy the opportunity for an enlarged forum and the chance to concentrate my efforts on the promotion of our outstanding product.

Our ultimate goal is, first, for beef to be the consumer's choice, and, second, for Angus to be their preference.

At the National Angus Conference held in Iowa last year [1997], one speaker noted the most important factor consumers used in purchasing beef — taste.

A wise man once said, "Quality is remembered long after price is forgotten." *Certified Angus Beef* [product] has the quality and taste, and we must keep informing the consumer of these facts.

I would hope that besides the usual duties of Miss American Angus, I would be able to work with the Certified Angus Beef (CAB) Program. I could be a visible representative and would do all I could to continue my consumer education. Because I love to travel, I'd be glad to go wherever necessary to work for our breed.

■ Involvement

We're going to work on increasing production and consumption, but just what's the future of the Angus business? That depends on the involvement of my generation.

Working as a 4-H junior beef leader, I found the young people were sponges waiting for knowledge. They wanted to know how to feed, vaccinate and show, and to learn whatever else we could teach them.

As a state junior Angus officer, I see enthusiasm in the eyes of our




MISS AMERICAN ANGUS CONTINUED

members. They are anxious to continue and improve our breed. As we begin work in Iowa to host the 2000 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS), the involvement of our junior members will help them learn and grow.

After having attended National Junior Angus Association LEAD (Leaders Engaged in Angus Development) conferences, I also see the importance of working at the national level with young people. I can draw on my experiences to work with and motivate more juniors, but I guess I've done some of that already. I read in a recent *Angus Journal* that I had inspired a young man whom I met at the Indiana NJAS. He wrote an editorial saying he decided to apply for his Bronze Award and a scholarship after he saw what I had accomplished. Miss American Angus needs to be a role model and to inspire young people.

I would also like to correspond with the state queens and encourage them to expand their roles and to be involved beyond the showing. They are all role models and Angus representatives. As such, they have a responsibility to their states and to their members to do all they can to promote our breed.

To be the best representative of the Angus industry, Miss American Angus needs to strive for excellence. I would promote the qualities of Angus cattle, educate consumers to buy the best beef, and involve and inspire our junior members to ensure our future.

Will Rogers said, "Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there." The Angus business is on the right track. I want to be on that train as we speed toward the next century and to inform everyone about the quality of our product. 

Getting to Know Anne Schmalenberger



Home town: *Vincent, Iowa*

Member of NJAA: *11 years*

Parents: *Steve & Nancy Schmalenberger*

University: *Iowa State University*

Major: *Agricultural Business*

Leadership activities: *Iowa Junior Angus Association — vice president, treasurer, director; 4-H — National 4-H Congress, county junior beef leader, club president, vice president, secretary, treasurer; Iowa Cattlemen's Association — Iowa Beef Team point leader*