

# Southern Seedstock Producers Enlisted to Build the Brand

BY STEVE SUTHER



Matt Perrier, American Angus Association assistant director of commercial relations, explains how the Angus Beef Record Service (BRS) can help seedstock and commercial Angus producers.



Ron Bolze, CAB director of genetic programs, uses the "Brand Builders" program to reach progressive seedstock operators who aim to help their customers produce high-quality cattle and to get paid for doing so.

The Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) Supply Development team launched the "Brand Builders" program Jan. 16-17 in Waco and Tyler, Texas, to increase Angus seedstock producers' knowledge and ownership of the *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>™</sup> (CAB<sup>®</sup>) brand. The new program reaches out to progressive seedstock operators who aim to help their customers produce high-quality cattle and to get paid for doing so. The series will move around the country, initially targeting areas of the South.

Brand Builders is a producer-focused, one-day field version of the quarterly "Building Blocks for Success" seminars at the CAB office in Wooster, Ohio. The seminars give licensees and guests an inside view of the purpose, philosophies and structure of CAB. Several producers are invited to attend each year.

## Program content

Following that model, Brand Builders explains each division's role in fulfilling the CAB mission of increasing demand for registered Angus cattle through a specification-based branded beef product.

Prior to the Texas meetings, area Angus producers were polled to gain background information on the scope and the goals of their operations and their relationships with customers. At the sessions, typically addressing 20-40 producers, CAB staff members detail the background and rationale for starting and growing CAB. They point out the resulting premium dollars in the market and explore ways to better connect networks of Angus producers to those premiums.

Key foodservice or retail licensees explain why they are involved with CAB, and an Extension specialist shares insight into Angus performance in state programs.

An active and open discussion period is the climax of the Brand Builders seminars. Producers and CAB staff discuss how to increase Angus influence in the area, how to overcome local obstacles to use of high-quality carcass genetics and how to channel high-quality progeny to best reward customers. Producers are asked to consider how licensed CAB feedlots can build lasting

links to them, including retained ownership, partnering and shared information options.

L.R. Sprott, Texas Extension beef specialist, helped Ron Bolze, CAB director of genetic programs, organize the first Brand Builders seminars. Sprott addressed producer questions on retained ownership by pointing out it has been a profitable strategy nine of the last 11 years, on average.

"Moreover, across the span of 10 years, in Ranch-to-Rail marketings from mid-March to mid-July, there has always been a set of cattle that made money. The good cattle with the right genetics go on to make money on feed — if I had them, nobody else would own them," he declared.

## Customer relations

Sprott listed several options seedstock producers might consider in building sustained links with their bull customers, including shared ownership of progeny. "Take an interest in your customers' cattle and help move them into premium markets," he advised.

Other discussions included how to get customers to realize the importance of expected progeny differences (EPDs) and other numbers and the advantages of using registered Angus bulls rather than merely "black" bulls.

Matt Perrier, American Angus Association assistant director of commercial relations, energized the seedstock producers in attendance with positive comments on the potential for growth in the area. He also explained how the Angus Beef Record Service (BRS) and marketing features of the Angus Resource Clearinghouse Network (ARCNet) can help seedstock and commercial Angus producers.

In assessing the seminar, producers in attendance commented, "Great information on potential financial benefits to Angus seedstock producers and their commercial bull buyers" and "Real-world discussion of factors that affect commercial profitability and CAB's role in that process."

