



Up Front

► by **John Crouch**, interim executive vice president

The value of black

I read with interest an article that appeared in the 2001 November/December issue of Indiana Beef titled "Hide Color: It Isn't Just a Black and White Issue." Allow me to say I fully agree with the implication in the title. I'll tell you why.

Angus: The original black

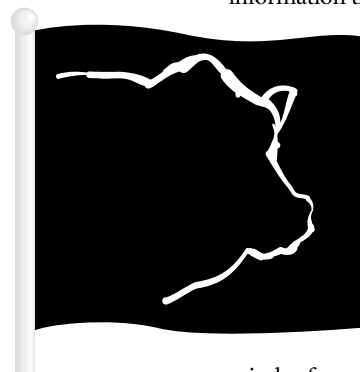
For starters, let's take a look at color and attempt to form some associations. First of all, black hide color implies Angus in the beef industry, just as a black-and-white hide implies Holstein in the dairy industry. Angus was the original black and polled breed and the only black and polled breed until recent years. It's not a choice — it's a birthright.

A second implication is that black is synonymous with factors that have to do with maternal ability, i.e. calving ease, fertility and milk production. I like to think this implication came from the Angus female's track record over the past 120 years of proving herself in both purebred and commercial herds across the country.

A third implication for black cattle perhaps started years ago at the beginning of the International Livestock Exposition in Chicago, Ill. During the 75-year tenure of

that great exposition, Angus posted wins in the carcass competition all but three years, and Angus crosses were named champions in two of those remaining years. This third implication mentioned, therefore, is that Angus produce high-quality beef carcasses and provide a delightful eating experience for the consumer.

In order to capitalize on this third implication, and what they knew to be one of the breed's greatest contributions to the pool of beef genetics, a far-sighted group of Angus breeders met in the 1970s and recommended the formation of the Certified Angus Beef (CAB) Program. Today that program is responsible for



annually marketing more than a half billion pounds of high-quality beef and beef products to consumers throughout the world.

A fourth implication is that black cattle are associated with a database of genetic information that is unparalleled in the world, both in size and scope. This database encompasses reproduction, growth, maternal value and last, but certainly not least, factors that determine end product merit. This, coupled with a comprehensive genetic monitoring program, has instilled confidence in the

minds of commercial producers, feeders and packers alike, in the ability of Angus genetics to perform for them at all levels. That confidence is a precious asset that the American Angus Association protects and respects every day.

A fifth implication involves time, specifically the time and effort Angus breeders and the American Angus Association have invested over the past 118 years to bring these programs to fruition. It

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For a complete listing of officers, refer to page 76.

REGIONAL MANAGERS—Refer to page 391.

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For a CAB staff listing, refer to page 182.

▶ UP FRONT

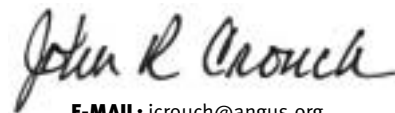
has not been easy, and it has not been without a price.

The color black is important from a beef cattle standpoint simply because of a combination of many factors associated with the focus of Angus breeders and the Association for the past century and then some. That focus has been concentrated on characterizing the Angus breed for those attributes that contribute to the success of commercial beef production and

consumer satisfaction. The color black is our Angus flag, and just as people in this country wave the Stars and Stripes with pride, we fly our flag with respect for the individuals who made the Angus breed what it is today.

We live in changing times. In order to ensure that Angus and Angus-cross cattle continue to maintain a position of prominence in the marketplace, we must do two things. The first is to maintain the

highest degree of accuracy and integrity in our data. The second is to properly record and document information on Angus genetics combined with genetics of other breeds. We then can be sure of the total value of **Angus** in the food industry.



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