

from the office

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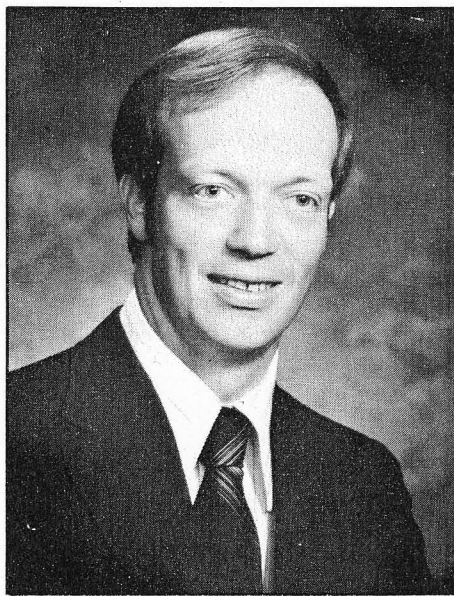
Breed associations have the responsibility of working with all breeders to help them become more efficient and increase their returns. We get considerable feedback, but not nearly enough, considering the number of members we have. The Angus association is currently collecting breeder ideas about their future needs and what they think their association should do to not only survive but to flourish and help them be more competitive in the future.

We welcome the input of all breeders and to stimulate greater input have written all the delegates and alternates to the annual meeting asking for their suggestions. Obviously, we will have a lot of different opinions and a lot of new ideas. The staff will present this information to the board and, hopefully, a long-term plan as well as some new innovations will come out of it.

"Big Breeder" Programs

One comment that came up on the floor of the annual meeting was a belief that too many of our programs were slanted toward the big breeder. This big breeder-little breeder controversy has probably been around since the beginning of breed associations as we know them today. If there is a problem in this area, I believe it is one of communications in that breed associations have failed to communicate how their programs effect all breeders and especially breeders with a few cows.

I believe that breeders with a few cows get more for the money they pay breed associations than breeders with a larger number of cows. Many of the services we provide aren't needed by breeders with a lot of cows because they have enough production units that they can afford to develop or employ the expertise they need rather than go to a breed association for it.



Regional Managers

Take the regional managers, for example. Breeders with more cows generally employ managers, herdsmen and/or other men who bring them the expertise they need. True, the regional managers try to make as many sales as possible—but not because they are involved in merchandising those breeders' cattle but because sales, like all local, state and national Angus events, are gathering points for Angus breeders. With more than 30,000 active Angus members, it is not feasible to visit each breeder each year. At events, the regional managers are available to anyone in attendance and spend a great deal of time following up on the contacts, questions and problems that arise at these events.

Most of the questions and problems regional managers deal with are from owner-operators and not from the larger herds. They can't visit everybody. But they do make a point to visit and help, if possible, breeders who have a problem, regardless of whether they have one cow or 100.

Sire Evaluation

Another good example is sire evaluation. A breeder with a small number of cows usually does not test a bull nor does he have the opportunity to use several bulls in his herd to compare them nor to travel widely to observe how these bulls are breeding. The sire evaluation program, paid for by breeders who test the bulls, provides objective information so that a breeder who doesn't even have enough cows to justify purchasing a really top bull can not only breed to the top bulls in the breed through the association's open A.I. program but can use the association's sire evaluation reports to objectively evaluate many of the bulls available.

I could go on program after program, but I think I have made my point. The Pathfinder report, AHIR, performance pedigrees, the association's advertisements, co-op ads, consignment sales, the ANGUS JOURNAL and even shows can be evaluated in the same manner. What these association programs do foremost is to advance and promote the Angus breed, which all breeders benefit from. They also in one way or another make it possible for a breeder with a few cows to compete effectively with breeders with lots of cows. The real thing that determines effectiveness or success is ingenuity and drive, and that is one of the most attractive aspects of the registered cattle business. 