

from the office

LEAD IN

by Dick Spader
Executive Vice President
American Angus Assn.



The issue of fair age representation of cattle at livestock shows, test stations or wherever competition exists has been addressed by every board of directors for the past 27 years or so.

Your present board is no exception. They too reviewed and discussed the policy of age determination and then established the procedures used at the 1981 North American Livestock Exposition in Louisville and the 1982 National Western Stock Show in Denver.

Actually the procedure for determining age (mouthing as it is commonly referred to) has not changed over the years. However, the follow-up on animals that appear to have advanced dental development has changed greatly.

Charts Validity Checked

Cattle mouthing charts have been available to members of the association for many years. These charts have served as the basis for age determination by an official of the association. However, to check their validity the association staff in 1981 accompanied Dr. Al Joesten to different herds to mouth cattle of known age and check their dental development against the existing mouthing charts. Included were herds in different environments, on different feeding programs and with diverse pedigrees. After examining cattle of various ages and checking the actual birth date, it was apparent that the mouthing charts used for the past several years were still valid and compatible with cattle being produced today.

With this information in hand the board decided to inspect cattle at the Louisville

and Denver shows. They also established the following procedure. The first step is to inform all exhibitors that the show cattle will be examined. It was also decided that no action be taken at the show where the cattle are mouthed. Only after the show are records of the breeder and the official moulder compared so that cattle with advanced dental development can be identified. At this time the association staff will contact breeders for age verification of animals that showed advanced dental development. After reviewing records any unusual cases will then be brought to the board of directors for review, and appropriate action if necessary.

Policy Well Received

This age determination policy appears to have been well received by association members. It fulfills an obligation and responsibility of the board to help insure fair competition, without causing any embarrassment to anyone at the show by having them appear before an eligibility committee for a review of their records.

The information acquired from mouthing at Louisville and Denver has been kept strictly confidential by the association. Every attempt has been made by the association not to incriminate anyone in the breed until all the facts are available and these facts have been thoroughly studied and evaluated by the board of directors.

The board will review the present mouthing procedure and evaluate it for use in the future. I am sure that they will appreciate any input from you as association members.

△