

## State Spotlight Series:

This is the fourth in a series of articles featuring the programs and services of some of the leading state Angus associations.

# Illinois Angus

A large number of small herds provide the state association a large number of active adult and junior members.

by Barb Baylor Anderson

Since 1955, the Illinois Angus Association has been providing services to the state's Angus producers. While Illinois, at about 58,000 square miles, ranks as only the 25th-largest state in terms of geography, its population of Angus cattle places the state just shy of the top 10 nationwide.

In 2003, the American Angus Association reported six Angus producers with 100 or more cows registered a total of 747 cattle in Illinois. More than 850 Illinois junior and regular members registered 6,668 head of Angus cattle.

"Illinois is a large state in terms of miles to travel, with many small herds of Angus cattle," says David Gibb, president of the Illinois Angus Association, Piper City.

Gibb recently answered the following questions to provide Angus producers from other states with a glimpse of Illinois as it approaches its 50th anniversary.

### Has membership in the Illinois Angus Association grown, gotten smaller or stayed the same throughout the years? Why?

The Illinois Angus Association experiences measured growth in membership from year to year. We had 458 paid memberships in 2003. I think the ongoing increase can be attributed largely to the association's ever-increasing efforts to improve effective communication through personal contact and mailings. We have even had some people join as a result of viewing our Web site, [www.illinoisangus.com](http://www.illinoisangus.com).

### What is the most successful program your state has developed to support its Angus breeders?

The Spotlight Program is our most successful program. It was created in 1976 as a way to provide an opportunity for junior members to purchase a heifer or steer at a

state or local association sale and bring the animal to the University of Illinois (U of I) in June for a weekend of activities.

During the annual event in Urbana, Ill., university staff members provide minicourses on animal science and grooming and offer tours of the university herd, farms and campus. The association sponsors a pizza party during the first evening, on Friday, to give participants the opportunity to make new friends. The show is the following day, on Saturday, with generous premiums provided through the nomination fees paid by each animal's producer.

The Spotlight is a great weekend for Illinois juniors and their parents. Many of our current Angus producers got their start by participating in the Spotlight Program.

### How do you motivate producers to participate in the various programs you offer?

We try and reach our producers through our state magazine and Web site with information that will motivate them to participate in our various programs. Specifically for junior members, we offer incentives in the form of monetary credit to use toward the purchase of animals in any state-sponsored sale. We believe that helps increase return participation in junior and state association activities and helps us retain and build membership.

### What is unique about your association?

Our association is unique in that we have a large junior membership that is very active locally, on the state level and nationally. Illinois has long been one of the top states in terms of junior memberships and programs, largely because our junior association is the basis for many of our state programs, including the Spotlight Program and the Illinois State Junior Show. Many breeding

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Upcoming Illinois Angus Events - Netscape

http://www.illinoisangus.com/upcoming.asp

Upcoming Illinois Angus Events

### Illinois Angus 2004 calendar of events

| Illinois Angus Association events |                                 |                               |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Jan. 21                           | Angus Outreach Seminar          | Indianapolis, Ind.            |
| Jan. 22                           | Angus Outreach Seminar          | Moline                        |
| Feb. 20-21                        | Illinois Futurity Show and Sale | Springfield                   |
| June 4-5                          | Spotlight Weekend               | Urbana                        |
| June 11-12                        | State junior show               | Peoria                        |
| June 25                           | Illinois Angus Golf Outing      | Rock Falls                    |
| June 26                           | Illinois Angus Field Day        | Sauk Valley Angus, Rock Falls |
| Nov. 20                           | Spotlight Sale                  | Congerville                   |
| Local Illinois association events |                                 |                               |
| March 1                           | Lamoine Valley Ass'n Sale       | Macomb                        |
| March 3                           | Bureau County Ass'n Sale        | Princeton                     |
| March 20                          | Wabash Valley Ass'n Sale        | Harrisburg                    |
| June 26                           | Central Illinois Preview Show   | Eureka fairgrounds            |
| June 27                           | Lamoine Valley Ass'n Field Day  | Macomb                        |
| Oct. 24                           | Northern Illinois Ass'n Sale    | Pecatonica                    |
| Nov. 24                           | Bureau County Ass'n Calf Sale   | Princeton                     |
| Nov. 26                           | Lamoine Valley Ass'n Calf Sale  | Macomb                        |

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programs in Illinois focus on our junior members as well.

In addition, the Illinois Futurity Show and Sale each February is a success story that has stood the test of time. As we approach its 50th year, we remember that the progressive-minded group of Illinois Angus breeders that formed the Illinois Angus Association in 1955 also had their first show and sale that year.

The Futurity was regarded at that time as the premier sale in the country. Many consignors sold the most sought-after genetics in the Angus breed. The Futurity's success continues today in terms of participation, and is still viewed as an opportunity to purchase some of the freshest genetics of the Angus breed from well-grounded programs.

### **Realizing producers need change throughout time, do you have a program that you think has outlived its usefulness?**

Not at this time. It seems anything we offer for a program or activity — whether it

be a junior show, state show and sale, field day, Spotlight Program, or golf outing — is always well-attended and supported.

### **Where do you see your state association in the future? What role will it play for Illinois members?**

We currently have a strong membership base in our state and junior associations, and we will remain service-oriented in the future by offering producers opportunities to promote their programs through shows and sales.

Our future is rooted in two basics — communication and service. We envision our Web site playing an ever-increasing role in communicating with our members. We also plan to keep members informed of

issues pertinent to the industry by way of meetings and field days.

### **What are the biggest challenges facing state associations today? How do you try to overcome those challenges?**

Perhaps our biggest challenge is trying to reach as many producers as possible and to keep them interested and excited about Illinois Angus without becoming complacent with the programs and activities available. Our association board of directors remains open to suggestions to implement new programs or to improve upon a current program based upon response from participants.

We also rely on people in key positions that allow us to be successful with our programs and activities.

