

from the office

LEAD IN

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Do you remember the first Angus cow you bought or shouldn't have bought? Or the first time you hung a 16-foot gate to a post not quite set? Or better yet, the first time you tagged a calf with a not-so-friendly mother?

I'm sure you remember all these occasions, and thousands more, that basically make up the life of a registered Angus breeder. It's called experience and, for most cattlemen, it has been gained by trial and error with a fair share of reward to accompany the entire ordeal.

For new breeders in this business, and there are nearly 2,500 each year, many of the trials of the cattle business are about to be experienced for the first time. And all too often these situations, either good or bad, will determine how long a person stays in the registered Angus business. I personally hope every new breeder stays in the business for a long time. Although there are no guarantees, following a few basic first steps can help assure a long-term reward in this industry for the new breeder.

In reviewing a few steps, the following 10 points are a start for the new breeder in the registered Angus business.

1. After you have joined the American Angus Assn., get to know your regional manager. He serves as the liaison between the association and the membership and is in an excellent position to give unbiased advice about management, bloodlines, marketing, etc., and quite likely knows where good cattle are available, if you're building a herd.
2. Become acquainted with your County Agent or Area Livestock Extension Specialist. Like regional managers, they are here to serve you and can give valuable insight into feeding and general management of livestock or land.
3. Attend seminars and other educational events sponsored by associations, extension service, feed companies, etc. These events usually have valuable information to bring you up to date with what's happening in the industry, plus you have an opportunity to meet other cattlemen in your local area.
4. Visit other Angus breeders and discuss the industry with them. This may be the most valuable time you spend.
5. Join your local and state Angus associations and become a part of the Angus business in your state. Associations are an integral part of being a successful Angus breeder and most organizations sponsor annual sales to help merchandise quality Angus or seminars to discuss the business. Don't forget the field days, shows, tours, etc.
6. Learn as much as you can before you buy cattle or feel comfortable with the advice you're getting before you make the first big investment in registered Angus.
7. Learn to understand and use performance records, both for when you buy cattle and for use in your own breeding program.
8. Know the current value of cattle (both commercial cattle and registered cattle) before you buy.
9. Have a breeding program in mind before you buy and keep it in mind as you build your herd and make selection decisions. This may sound simple but it's one of the biggest challenges of a seed stock producer.
10. Ask questions. Your national association has a staff and departments for activities, performance and public relations that are eager to help you in any way possible, but we can't do it if you don't ask. The same holds true for your state and local Angus associations. Utilize the experience available at no cost and I'm sure you will find it of great value in your decision making.

These 10 steps may not be the total answer to achieving success in the Angus business but they are certainly 10 steps that many cattlemen wish they would have taken. It's also the responsibility of not only the associations but of all breeders in the business to assist the new breeder in the Angus industry. When someone asks, give them the best advice you can and help them to establish a breeding, management and marketing program that will help the new breeder for years to come. Remember, every established breeder of today was a new breeder at one time. **A**