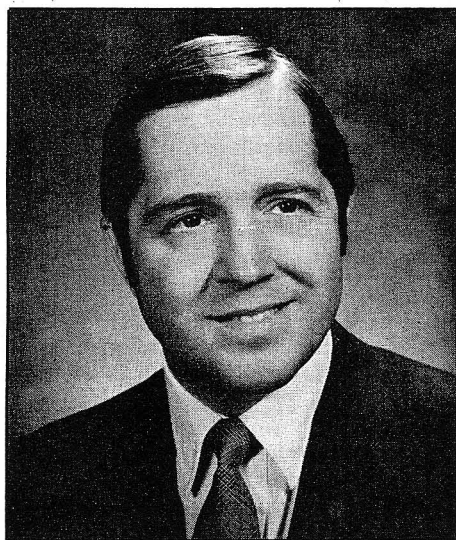


# from the office

## LEAD IN

By Richard Spader  
Executive Vice President  
American Angus Association



The year of the EAR? In some parts of this country one might think that ear, hump and dewlap are the coming thing in cattle. It's for sure that when many of you put bulls on the market this season you will compete head to head with some kind of Brahman cross animals for the commercial cattleman's dollar.

In this battle you have more going for you than mere slogans or fads. There is sound evidence you can use to sell your registered Angus bulls as opposed to the crossbred "eared" breeds, or the "easy calving" Texas Longhorns.

First of all, there is no reason for you to take a back seat to the Texas Longhorn when it comes to calving ease. Research done at Montana State University in 1982, and recently released, shows there is no difference in calving ease between Angus bulls and Longhorn bulls. The two Angus bulls used in the test were not specifically selected for calving ease, according to Dr. Art Litton of Montana State University. In fact, there was virtually no progeny information available on one of the Angus bulls. Work is still being done on the feedlot and carcass phase of the research project, but it is my guess that the Angus-sired calves will have a strong edge in this competition.

The point is, almost every Angus breeder in this country has bulls that will provide calving ease equal to the Texas Longhorn. You have the bonus to offer of more valuable calves. So this year identify your bulls that should produce "easy calving" and advertise and merchandise them as such.

Now back to the ear. Some revealing research has just been released by Kansas State University. In a feedlot performance test of Angus and Brahman x Angus steers, during cold weather, the straightbred Angus steers outgained the Brahman x Angus by .21 pounds a day during a 184-day feeding

trial. What's more, the Angus steers graded 90 percent Choice compared to only 10 percent for the Brahman cross steers, despite a back fat thickness of .46 inch. There was no difference in feed efficiency. The only advantage Brahman cross steers had was their yield grade but there are few, if any, Angus steers that need to be fed anywhere near 184 days. In fact, research at other universities has shown that 130 to 140 days on feed is about ideal for straight-bred Angus.

But aren't those Brangus-type females more fertile? Aren't they crossbreds for all intents and purposes? No, not according to research done at Louisiana State University. In two years of tests at LSU between Angus and Brangus, the Angus heifers had a 15 percent higher fertility rate and weaned 10 percent more calves. Based upon this research you can offer better performance from your well-bred Angus females compared with Brangus females.

So if you have customers who want calving ease, fertility, a higher percentage calf crop weaned, and better feedlot performance, particularly in cold weather, you can provide it with your straightbred Angus. We don't have to take a back seat to any breed when it comes to traits of high economic importance.

You are, however, in strong competition with the producers of other breeds of cattle within your market area. So don't sit back and let eared cattle or continental cattle or long-horned cattle slice into your market. You can prove that Angus out-perform other breeds based upon university research. The producers of other breeds would give their eye teeth to have information like this on their cattle, but it simply is not available. It is an edge that only you have when it comes to selling bulls and females, but it is of little value unless you use it. **AJ**