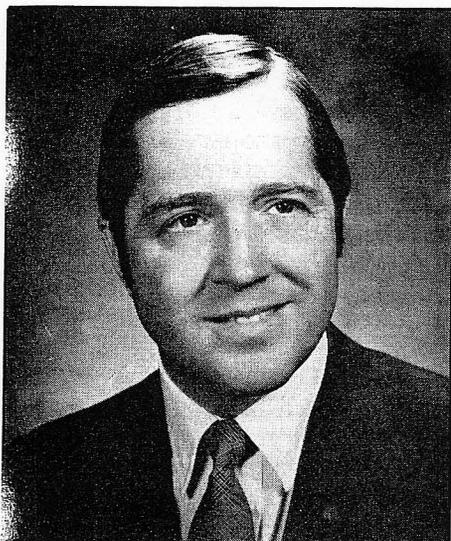


from the office

LEAD IN

by Richard Spader, Executive Vice President, American Angus Association



The spring of 1985 brings some exciting trends that may spell good fortune for breeders of registered Angus cattle.

Early sales of registered Angus have been encouraging. Angus bulls with good performance records and a sound pedigree have been selling for higher prices than a year ago. The demand for the right kind of Angus bulls has improved in the past year.

The indication is that those people who influence what happens in the cattle business are in the process of changing their way of thinking and their approach to making a profit in the beef cattle business.

Just recently, a black baldy steer was named grand champion of the 1,400-head Houston Stock Show. What's more, a straightbred Angus that was eligible for registration was the reserve grand champion. Both weighed in at about 1,200 lb. and were obviously

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visually qualified for our Certified Angus Beef program.

What's more, I can see a change in the thinking of educators and researchers at many of our agricultural colleges and universities. They, along with many more breeders, are thinking and talking about "optimums" rather than "maximums," and about balancing breeds and traits to particular environments.

Our "elephant" ads have stimulated a lot of thought in the industry. They have made some people mad—mad enough to write in and tell us their thoughts. This means they have been thinking. And when anyone really seriously thinks about the problems that face the cattle industry today they almost have to concede that we are at least partially right.

And this isn't peanuts, not for us Angus breeders. We are in the best position in the industry to capitalize on this new wave—the wave of more efficient commercial beef production—the return to basics.

As I mentioned in a previous column, this doesn't mean that everyone who raises black cattle is going to profit from the new wave. Performance is still the name of the game when it

comes to merchandising breeding cattle. We must be able to prove to our customers that our bulls will perform and that the cattle they sire will perform in the pasture, in the feedlot and on the rail.

I think we are going to see more and more feedlot operators demand predictability in the cattle they buy to put on feed. And by the same token, packers are going to demand it of the people who supply them with cattle.

In the end, the success that both feedlot operators and packers have in improving the quality and efficiency of their products will depend upon the decisions that registered cattle breeders make.

And, finally, our individual success will depend upon how we advertise and merchandise our cattle. In fact, we have lost over the years some belief on the part of commercial cattlemen and educators in the registered seed stock concept. We are going to have to sell Angus performance, quality and the value of registration certificates.

If we, in the Angus business, accept these challenges I am convinced that we can capitalize on the trends that are developing in the beef cattle industry.

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