

# Lead In

by Richard Spader, executive vice president



## A road map to success

If you're in the business of breeding registered Angus cattle, you've probably taken time to browse the American Angus Association's Spring *Sire Evaluation Report*, which was sent to you last month, or to study the information on the Internet. By now you've likely made some decisions that will affect your breeding program in the spring of 1999 and beyond.

The Spring 1999 *Sire Evaluation Report* was the largest to date in many ways. With the growing database of information, more new sires were added for the traits of economic importance to the industry. A total of 219 new bulls were added for carcass traits, bringing the total number of bulls with carcass information to 2,163. This part of the report has grown each year, and 89 of the top 100 sires for registrations in fiscal year 1998 had carcass data available. Last year those sires accounted for about 30% of the calves registered.

### ■ Getting the word out

This information is extensively disseminated to the industry. All active registered Angus breeders receive the report (more than 23,000 producers). The *Sire Evaluation Report* also is sent to 65,000 commercial cattlemen who had at least one registered Angus bull transferred to them in the past three years. Additional mailings bring the total to nearly 90,000 producers of registered and commercial cattle.

It has been the goal of your national Board of Directors to make this valuable breed

information available to as many producers as possible. It's also one of the good reasons to register and transfer your bulls to commercial cattle producers. Along with the *Sire Evaluation Report*, these same commercial cattlemen receive the *Angus Beef Bulletin* — three issues in the spring and one in the fall. The March *Angus Beef Bulletin*, totaling 128 pages, was full of important industry and breed editorial geared to producing quality beef and to finding ways to get paid for it.

important economic traits and to categorize sires for these traits. Your Board has never assigned so-called "trait leaders" for a good reason — each producer has to determine a level of need for these traits, which can vary widely in the nation's cross section of where Angus cattle are produced on a registered or commercial basis.

Quite often as I talk to registered and commercial cattle breeders, they tell me of specific needs that exist in their herds. These needs may be for growth,

herds and which sires will help them make directional changes where needed.

### ■ Needs differ

Not only do herds vary widely in the traits that are important to them, but not all herds have the same production goals. For example, selection for extremes in growth or milk in an area with limited feed resources will likely result in problems. On the other hand, these same levels of growth and milk may work well where environmental conditions are more favorable.

For most cattlemen, a balance of traits is the name of the game. Bulls offering acceptable birth weights, ease of calving, adequate growth and carcass traits, and daughters that produce an optimum amount of milk are in heavy demand. Angus always has been a balanced breed, and sire summaries help identify with great accuracy the sires that help maintain the balance.

Obviously it is not the role of the Association to define the market for each member. Rather it is the Association's role to define the genetics available within the breed to help members achieve success in whatever market they decide to supply.

National Sire Evaluation identifies the genetics, and you evaluate your needs and those of your customers. Use the *Sire Evaluation Report* as your road map to whatever breeding-program destination you select.

## SPRING 1999 ANGUS SIRE EVALUATION

**4,458 sires listed of which 58% have carcass data**

### Main report — 2,333 sires

- 1,173 sires with National Cattle Evaluation (NCE) carcass EPDs = 50%
- 1,607 sires with NCE and interim EPDs = 69%

### Young Sire Supplement — 2,125 sires

- 966 sires with interim carcass EPDs = 45%

### Total carcass database — 2,163 sires

### Total progeny — 41,974

89 of the top 100 sires for calves recorded have been evaluated for carcass

219 new sires added within the last six months

388 new sires added within the last year



### ■ Not a contest

As you evaluate the spring 1999 report and, maybe more importantly, as you interpret it for your customers, remember National Sire Evaluation is best used as a road map to help you reach a desired destination or goal in your breeding program.

The *Sire Evaluation Report* and its contents should not be viewed as a contest where there is a clear-cut winner but as a dedicated effort by the Association to characterize the genetics of the Angus breed for

milk, moderate birth weights, carcass traits or any combination of the 14 expected progeny differences (EPDs) currently included in the *Sire Evaluation Report*. Every producer's needs are different.

The *Sire Evaluation Report* offers the best option available to help those producers correct deficiencies and improve overall production through proper sire selection. The report can help cattle producers determine which bulls excel in the traits that are most important to their