



Up Front

► by **John Crouch**, executive vice president

NJAA: Investing in our future

For a youngster growing up in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains in eastern Tennessee, one of the true highlights of the year was the fair at Gray Station. What began as the Washington County Fair, and later became the Appalachian Fair, was first conducted on the combination baseball field/playground at the school. The cattle were housed in a large tent pitched between the seesaw, swings and home plate. I will never forget the excitement of loading the truck, tying the show box on the back and heading for the fair. As with many young people, this began a lifelong involvement in the purebred cattle industry, and it all began with the quest for a purple ribbon.

Benefits of junior membership

When we consider the evolution of our youth programs over the past half of a century, it becomes very apparent that the development of the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) is one of the success stories of the 20th century.

When the American Angus Association moved its headquarters from Chicago, Ill., to Saint Joseph, Mo., in 1956, a full-time person was appointed to direct the activities of Angus breeders 21 years of age and younger. Increased activity and interest made way for the establishment of the NJAA in 1980. This humble beginning spawned the largest junior beef breed organization in the world. It boasts a membership of nearly 12,000 young people from coast to coast and border to border.

These young people have virtually the same ownership, registration and transfer privileges as regular members and much more. Belonging to the "Angus family" promotes a sense of pride and *esprit de corps* seldom found in other youth organizations. There is a sense of belonging, a sense of purpose in meshing natural resources and cattle, and a satisfaction of accomplishment that is so important in youth development.

In addition, youth in this elite group of young NJAA members are provided the following:

- The May and September "junior" issues of the *Angus Journal*.
- Two issues annually of *Directions*, the NJAA newsletter.
- Eligibility to participate in American

Angus Association-sponsored shows, such as the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS), regional shows and regional previews (entry fees are assessed).

- Eligibility to participate in the annual Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) Conference and regional LEAD conferences (registration fee is assessed).
- Opportunity to participate in the 13 individual and state contests conducted at the NJAS.
- Opportunity to participate in a mentoring program during the NJAS.
- Opportunity to participate in the National Showmanship Contest, provided they qualify at the state level.
- Eligibility to apply for Angus Foundation scholarships and awards.
- Eligibility to participate in the NJAA National Junior Recognition Program.
- Access to educational and promotional materials developed by the American Angus Association.
- Eligibility to participate in American Angus Association programs such as Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR), Angus Resource Clearinghouse Network (ARCNet), and the National Angus Conference and Tour.
- Access to Web-based online services provided by the Association, including member logon.
- Access to professional services and advice from American Angus Association staff, regional managers and employees.

A share of the cost

The annual budget for the Activities and Junior Activities Department sits at \$1.06

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

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AMERICAN ANGUS AUXILIARY

President—Nancy Jo Sullivan, Marietta, OH
For a complete listing of officers, refer to page 86.

REGIONAL MANAGERS—Refer to page 195.

CERTIFIED ANGUS BEEF LLC

President—Jim Riemann, Wooster, Ohio
For a CAB staff listing, refer to page 118.

UP FRONT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

million, of which approximately \$500,000, or 50%, is targeted for Junior Activities. This funding includes the NJAS, which is the largest single-breed beef cattle show in the world; the annual LEAD Conference; junior show premiums; contest and competition sponsorship and awards; communications with the junior membership; literature and information for state junior Angus association officers and advisors; special awards and scholarships;

the NJAA Board of Director activities and training and more.

We are very proud of our young leaders who participate in NJAA activities, and we are constantly striving to improve and increase the effectiveness of these important programs; however, this does come at a price. In this regard, a letter to the editor relative to the action of our Board of Directors in placing annual membership dues on members of the NJAA was printed in the April issue (see "Editor's Mailbox," page 308).

In view of the specifics set forth, it seems only equitable that members of the NJAA

contribute a small portion toward costs for programs that will benefit them for a lifetime.

For youth joining the Association after Oct. 1, 2002, dues for junior membership are \$20 per year — about the cost of a night out at the movies with a hamburger, fries and a giant Coke afterward. Which do you consider the better investment?



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