

by Mark McCully
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New in town?

Over the last two years, my wife and I have been relocating from Wooster, Ohio, to Saint Joseph, Mo. Moving into a new community is harder than I remembered.

We had lived in Wooster for close to 20 years, so we had gotten pretty knowledgeable about the city and where everything was located. We established our doctors, dentists and auto mechanics. We found our favorite grocery stores and restaurants, and we knew where to get the best ice cream in town (Hartzler's Dairy, in case you were wondering).

Basically, we knew our way around and how to get things done. That all changed when we moved to Saint Joseph and had to start the learning all over again.

This experience reminded me how new members might feel joining the American Angus Association. Our business of raising registered Angus cattle is complicated.

The science and technology around genetic selection has gotten more and more sophisticated. We have processes to follow to submit data or DNA samples. There are steps to take to properly register and transfer animals. The business is full of jargon, and we use acronyms all over the place.

While the veteran breeder doesn't think twice about what EPD, AHIR, PVP, CAB or AGI stand for, someone new to the Angus family could sure be overwhelmed by our alphabet

soup. Even organizationally we are somewhat complicated, with a parent company of the American Angus Association and four wholly owned subsidiaries of Angus Media, Certified Angus Beef LLC, Angus Genetics Inc., and the Angus Foundation.


One of the long-range objectives adopted by the Board of Directors last fall was to "enhance membership experience and success." Making sure a new member feels welcome and has the information they need is a key part of this. Recently the Association's new member packet was revamped.

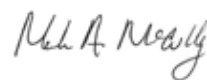
When a member joins today, they receive a very inviting package of information specifically designed to welcome them to the Angus family. It helps them get started and begin utilizing the many programs at Angus. The first time they come to AAA Login, a welcome video pops up. We want our new breeders to know we value them and are happy to have them as a member.

Beyond those "first time" experiences, the focus on elevating our educational efforts through Angus University is intended to make pertinent resources available to both the veteran and new Angus breeder. We're planning Lunch

and Learn small group sessions this summer that will answer questions surrounding AIMS (Angus Information Management Software) and other programs.

Those initiatives are just the beginning as we start to rework resources for all members. We understand www.angus.org is a primary source of information for our membership and those interested in learning more about the Angus breed. Like all websites, it is difficult to keep the content current and easily accessible to the user. We are currently making plans to improve our website and do so in a way that is the least disruptive to our membership.

As we work through enhancing the membership experience, we are looking for your feedback. How can we get better? Not only do we want to welcome the "new breeders in town," but we want to make our website and other educational resources helpful and easy to use. 



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