

# Angus Stakes

by Shauna Rose Hermel, editor



## Catch the fever

The first of April is a dangerous time of year for Angus producers and *Angus Journal* staff alike.

Calving season is winding down for most producers, and they've gotten a few good nights' sleep. Ranchers looking at a new crop of Angus calves romping in the pasture are at high risk for a psychological complex that rivals the frenzy noted in the California gold rush. It's the cowboy strain of spring fever.

How many of you have thought to yourselves that the best bull calf you've ever raised is in this spring's calf crop? If you have, consider yourself infected. Other symptoms may include:

- A crazed gleam in the eyes when looking at calves;
- A fetish for numbers, often first noticed as reciting expected progeny differences in one's sleep;
- A phobia of losing the latest *Sire Evaluation Report* or stud catalog, manifested in white knuckles as the infected producer grips the publication;
- Multiple trips to the pasture for no apparent reason;
- Multiple phone calls to fellow breeders and other cattle enthusiasts (this may increase the spread of the infection and may magnify its severity);
- A greater tendency to smile;
- Exaggerated descriptive arm movements;
- Increased daydreaming;
- Visualization of new opportunities;
- Excitability; and
- BIG plans.

This infection can be highly contagious if not selfishly isolated. We can only hope that it will lead to a chronic condition.

**Angus Journal** staffers are suffering a somewhat similar scenario. With this May "herd health" issue headed to the printer and with two months to put together the Herd Reference Edition for July publication,

we're not spending quite as many late hours in the office. A few nights' rest and a little vacation have brought creativity out of remission.



SHAUNA HERMEL PHOTO

Looking at a fresh crop of story ideas, new projects and travel itineraries makes us vulnerable to a somewhat different strain of spring fever. There's no doubt in our minds that the best stories we've ever dreamed of doing with the best photo possibilities are in the works.

Symptoms are similar:

- A crazed gleam in the eyes when looking at story leads;
- A fetish for new projects, often first noticed as a reluctance to focus on normal tasks (such as writing this column);
- Repeated calls to travel agents due to a phobia of missing out on the best airline discounts;
- Multiple planning sessions, which serve to increase the spread of the infection and magnify its severity;
- A greater tendency to smile;
- Exaggerated descriptive arm movements;
- Increased daydreaming;

- Visualization of new opportunities;
- Excitability; and
- BIG plans.

**The real danger** — to producers and staffers alike — is in being immune to infection, developing antibodies to new ideas, optimism and potential profit through vaccination with Tradition™, No Risk®, It Can't Be Done™ and Woe Is Me™.

One of the keys to success spouted by motivational speakers is to visualize success before visualizing its roadblocks. The theory is, if you concentrate first on the obstacles, you'll get bogged down in why success can't be attained, and you'll never achieve it.

If you focus on the "success" as a given, then look at what you have to overcome to attain it, you'll face the challenges with a mind-set more open to creative thinking and problem solving.

Same goal. Same obstacles. Different mind-set. Different outcome.

**If infected**, you've got a little ways to go to make that potential herd sire pan out to be the best bull you've ever raised (weaning, development, semen test, marketing, etc.). Based on past experience, the pedigree and data behind the calf, and your current state of enthusiasm (which is a marvelous motivator), you're on track to make it happen.

In the same vein, we've got a little ways to go to make our "best ever" story ideas come to fruition (travel, good weather, good interviews, getting them on paper). Based on past experience, a little insight and the enthusiasm behind the plan, we're on track to bring you the best issues ever.

**Catch the fever.** While you're at it, infect a friend. The cattle industry could use an outbreak of spring fever. We may all become "realizers" — realizing we can achieve our herd goals and the goals of the American Angus Association's Long-Range Plan.

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