

The Value of Youth Programs



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It is difficult to assess the impact of youth programs on the Angus industry. Obviously, extraordinary revenue is generated from youth project purchases; however, the most important far-reaching effect is the new people that are attracted to Angus. The communications and public relations department recently surveyed new adult members. More than two of three indicated they had youth livestock projects. One of every five said that their current herd resulted from their own youth projects.

The influence of "youth projects" runs deep in the family. The statistics above show that adults do not forget the livestock experiences from their youth, but it is just as important to realize that young family members often choose Angus because Dad or Grandpa raised them. Also, I have visited several families where the parents started a herd because one of their children had an Angus youth project.


The leadership of the American Angus Assn. is aware of the potential of our youth program to help guarantee the future of Angus. In fact, several men currently serving on the board of directors were involved in junior activities themselves or through their children. Provisions for junior memberships in the American Angus Assn. were established in 1951, and today more than 8,000 active members of this organization are less than 21 years old!

Association staff are continually encouraged to develop programs that not only attract young people to Angus, but challenge their ability and dedication toward producing superior cattle. National, regional, state, and local junior shows have been developed so that young people can test their ability to produce, select, and exhibit superior Angus beyond the boundaries of their county fair. Today, Angus junior shows are the envy of the beef industry. Our national showmanship contest is undoubtedly the most competitive, prestigious event of its kind.

Because Angus are distributed more evenly throughout the United States than any other beef breed, our local and state junior associations are very strong and number more than 70. These junior groups are "paying dividends" by developing young leaders who will someday be the backbone of our adult leadership. We cannot overemphasize the value of leadership opportunities early in the lives of young people. Confidence, background experience, and inclination toward leadership come with much difficulty, unless they are offered early in life and the results are rewarding.

Our youth program has come a long way since the decision was made to provide financial assistance to junior Angus shows.

The Association offers leadership training, on-the-job experience, performance testing services, an open artificial insemination policy, junior tours and field days, and a steady flow of production information to today's youth, much of which was unknown to their previous generation.

We cannot stop here or be satisfied, even though new junior membership numbers are increasing from 5% to 10% a year. We will improve, change and develop opportunities whenever there is potential for us to provide opportunities, challenges, and rewards to the future of this great breed of cattle. 

Advice for Potential Angus Breeders

The Five Most Important Steps

Assisting prospective breeders to get started in the Angus business is a responsibility of every Angus breeder. Time spent offering help and advice can be as important as selling a few head of cattle . . . so whether you are an experienced breeder or just getting started, take note of these points considered most important by your association.

- Join the American Angus Assn., and receive the benefit of information flow.
- Contact your regional manager and discuss your goals.
- Inform your county agent or livestock specialist that you are interested in Angus and visit as many livestock events and reputable breeders as possible.
- Study the history and trends of Angus in your area; then evaluate your resources (space, time, money, feed supply, etc.) and marketing potential.
- Purchase cattle within your budget from reputable breeders who specifically select for the cattle that match your goals.