

Compiled by Megan Silveira,
assistant editor



Alex Cozzitorto

Sealing the Deal

Heartbreak. I believe this is one word that can wrap up how the agriculture industry is feeling regarding current legislation being passed through our state governments. This type of legislation is especially scary because it will change the face of food production forever.

Growing up, I always heard the term “advocate.” More specifically, it was used in the phrase, “It is our job to advocate for the agriculture industry.”

I love what it stands for, so I will be the first to admit, this is a phrase I throw around a lot. I’ve used it in many speeches at junior nationals and in articles for agriculture publications, but, when all is said and done, I have to ask myself, “Have I reached an audience who really needs to hear what I am saying?”

As I grow, I realize talking to other members of the industry about the importance of advocating for agriculture is important. However, I also realize I have been — mostly — “preaching to the choir.”

I need to up my game and embrace opportunities to reach an audience that needs to hear my message, an audience of people from all demographics who, for all kinds of reasons, have become generations removed from the agriculture industry. It is a big audience, and they simply do not know what they do not know. The radicals have capitalized on this reality and have their ear right now.

It occurs to me that we, as an industry, must decide just how far we will let them go in allowing the dissemination of misinformation and untruths before they seal the deal on ending animal agriculture.

Now don’t get me wrong, the agriculture industry has been fighting the good fight in advocating for our industry for years, but with the new suggested legislation for the ballot in Colorado, the fight just advanced to a whole new level of threat.

If state governments are able to change the law to fit their agenda, our hands will be tied. The time and energy we have all devoted to producing safe, wholesome and sustainable food for the world will be a thing of the past. This legislation is being created by people who have never stepped foot on a farm or ranch, and the laws they are proposing will essentially make meat production impossible.

We come from generations of families who have fought hard to preserve an industry that has

withstood the test of time. From droughts to blizzards to pandemics, we have prevailed; but there has never been anything quite as threatening as this proposed legislation.

The stakes are high, and whether we are ready to accept it or not, this fight is about to be our responsibility as

the next generation. It will be up to us to preserve this industry. It will not be easy, but it will be worth it.

The time is now for us, as the future of agriculture, to remember the industry that raised us, and choose to fight for it.

It is time for our generation to seal the deal on preserving American agriculture. Our livelihood. Our legacy. Our responsibility.

— Alex Cozzitorto

We come from generations of families who have fought hard to preserve an industry that has withstood the test of time.
— Alex Cozzitorto

Continued on page 72

RECOGNITION Bronze and Silver Awards

Katherine Kinder, Hagerman, Idaho; McKenzie Kostel, McKinney, Texas; Paige Lemenager, Hudson, Ill.; and Savannah Page, Jefferson, Ga.; have earned the National Junior Angus Association's (NJAA) Bronze and Silver awards, according to Jaclyn Upperman, education and events director of the American Angus Association in Saint Joseph, Mo. Elise Meche, Morganza, La., has earned the NJAA's Bronze award.

The Bronze and Silver awards are the first two levels of the NJAA Recognition Program that began in 1972. Junior Angus breeders must apply for the awards, then meet point requirements in many areas of participation before receiving the honors. Applicants are evaluated in areas of junior Angus association activities and leadership; participation in showmanship, contests and shows; using performance testing to improve their herd; and their progress in producing and merchandising Angus cattle.

Katherine Kinder is the 12-year-old daughter of Willis and Cindy Kinder. The Hagerman, Idaho, native attends North Valley Academy Charter School.

Kinder is a member of the NJAA and the Idaho Junior Angus Association (IJAA). She has shown at all levels and participated in the graphic design contest at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS).

She has also submitted weight data to the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®) and consigned cattle to the Gem State Classic Sale.

Tracy Johns' 18-year-old daughter is from McKinney, Texas. **McKenzie Kostel** attends Acellus Academy and

is a member of both the NJAA and the Texas Junior Angus Association (TJAA).

She has served her state association as both director and reporter. At the NJAS, Kostel has participated in the team sales and fitting contests.

Hudson, Ill., resident, **Paige Lemenager**, is the 17-year-old daughter of Luke and Stacy Lemenager. She currently attends Normal Community West High School.

Lemenager is a member of both the NJAA and the Illinois Junior Angus Association, where she previously served as director.

She has shown at all levels. At the NJAS, she has participated in the photography and team sales contests and the American Angus Auxiliary-sponsored All-American *Certified Angus Beef*® Cook-Off.

Lemenager was involved in both the NJAS mentoring program and the Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) conference. She has also consigned cattle to the Illinois Angus Futurity.

Phil and Christy Page's 17-year-old daughter attends Jackson County Comprehensive High School.

Savannah Page is from Jefferson, Ga., and is involved with her local 4-H club and FFA chapter, for which she has received numerous awards.

She is also a member of the NJAA and the Georgia Junior Angus Association (GJAA). Page has served her state association as both director and royalty.

At the NJAS, Page participated in the creative writing contest and served as a voting delegate. She has participated in shows and showmanship contests at all levels.

Elise Meche is from Morganza, La.

She is the 13-year-old daughter of Hilary and Jake Meche and currently attends STEM Magnet Academy of Point Coupee.

Meche is a member of the NJAA and the Louisiana Junior Angus Association (LJAA), where she has served as director and royalty. At the NJAS, she has participated in the photography contest and the mentoring program.

Raising the Bar conference

The NJAA brought 46 junior Angus leaders together in Montgomery, Ala., April 8-11, to participate in the 13th annual Raising the Bar conference.

"Deciding where to attend college can be a stressful decision, so we want to make sure juniors are exposed to options, so when the time comes, they can make an informed decision about where they may choose to attend," says Madeline Bauer, American Angus Association events coordinator. "In addition to teaching kids about college opportunities, we want them to expand their networks. A goal of ours is to make sure everyone knows everyone by the end of their career in the NJAA."

Sponsored by the Angus Foundation, the conference hosted Angus junior leaders from 21 state junior Angus associations.

Participants toured the Auburn University campus, heard from industry experts, took part in leadership training workshops, toured local Angus and agriculture operations, and networked with participants.

The following junior Angus members attended Raising the Bar conference:



The National Junior Angus Association hosted 46 junior Angus leaders in Montgomery, Ala., April 8-11, for the 13th annual Raising the Bar conference.

ALABAMA

Heather Gladney

ARKANSAS

Nicholas Pohlman

CALIFORNIA

Kathryn Coleman

COLORADO

Kyli Kraft

Jacee Sumpter

FLORIDA

Camille Britt

ILLINOIS

Reese Anderson

Addison Bartlow

Ella Brooks

Paige Lemenager

Eric Schafer

Lauren Wolter

INDIANA

Skylar Bennett

Brooke Davis

IOWA

Allie Bieber

Andy Driscoll

Erin Driscoll

Avery Mather

KANSAS

Alex Cozzitorto

Austin Woodrow

MARYLAND

Avery Dull

Madison Ohler

Alyson Schulze

Kyle Schulze

Bella Rabaiotti

Payton Troxell

MISSOURI

Alexis Koelling

Ethan Vanderwert

Rance Wheeler

NEBRASKA

Reagan Skow

NEW YORK

Anna King

NORTH CAROLINA

Marcie Harward

Ava Wood

Justin Wood

OREGON

Peyton Rawe

PENNSYLVANIA

Kierson Reasner

Laney Reasner

TENNESSEE

Alli Perry

TEXAS

Taylor Martin

Bayler Smith

Karsen Smoot

VIRGINIA

Gordon Clark

Suter Clark

WASHINGTON

Kelsey Vejraska

WISCONSIN

Kelly Gaffney

Ava Leibfried

