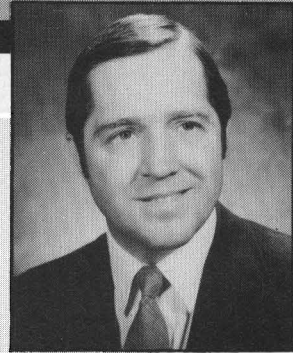


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**O**ne way that you members of the American Angus Assn. provide the Association staff and Board of Directors with valuable information is by participating in surveys. The most recent example is the AHIR member survey in which some 1,469 people told us their opinions about AHIR and National Sire Evaluation and how they and their customers used the information in breeding and merchandising programs.

One breeder wrote at the end of his survey, "I like the EPD's, but it has taken me some time to get used to them as I liked EBV's. The EPD's give you more of a concept of the animal's true breeding values . . . and most of my customers seem to understand EPD's better."

**S**ome people weren't quite so positive. They either want information included in AHIR records or, in some cases, less. Others wonder about the accuracy of some of the figures but, for the most part, we found that a large percentage of AHIR participants trust and use AHIR, EPD and Sire Evaluation in their breeding programs. Moreover, the information is requested and used by more than 70 percent of the respondents' registered Angus breeder customers and nearly 43 percent of commercial bull customers. The complete survey and its results are printed elsewhere in this issue of the *Angus Journal* and I think you will find the results both interesting and useful.

For example, there has been a lot of talk about milk EPD (weaning weight maternal) information the last year or so. As a result, I probably would have assumed that this would be the most important trait that registered Angus breeders consider when making breeding decisions and the trait of primary importance for commercial bull customers.

But that's not so. As you will see from the survey some 30.6 percent of registered breeders listed calving ease as the most important trait and another 11.6 percent listed a related trait, birth weight, as their number one concern. Of the small sample of commercial cow-calf producers who were surveyed, an even 59 percent listed calving ease as their number one concern, while another 23.1 percent listed birth weight as the most important trait.

**T**he survey was sent to all members who are enrolled in the AHIR program and nearly half of them took the time and effort to fill it out and return it to the Association. That is an excellent response for any survey.

At the top of many breeders' minds these days is Sire Evaluation and the EPD concept. Like many other American Angus Assn. programs, Sire Evaluation has grown since it was started in 1974. Breeders now consider it to be not just a breed improvement tool, but a valuable marketing tool, as well.

**I**f you would like to comment on any part of the survey or its results, we welcome them. Rest assured that your thoughts, like the results of the survey, will be considered as we plan for future growth and improvement of American Angus Assn. programs.

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