

# Lead In

by Richard Spader, executive vice president



## Angus provide more solutions to today's challenges

Angus cattle are bred and raised in all parts of the country — from the Northern Plains to the south of Texas and from the West Coast to the East Coast. Few other breeds enjoy this widespread acceptance. Virtually everywhere beef cattle are raised in the United States, Angus cattle and Angus families are likely to be found. This is best observed each year at the Annual Meeting of the American Angus Association or at numerous other events where Angus producers and families gather from nearly every state in the nation.

Though we are truly a national breed, Angus production varies greatly from one region of the country to another. Management programs vary from the hot, humid regions of Florida to the mountains of Colorado. We are blessed with a breed that has the adaptability to survive and to prosper in the extremes of this country, and that is what makes the Angus breed unique. The natural advantages of Angus make it the breed that offers more solutions to the challenges of the industry than any other.

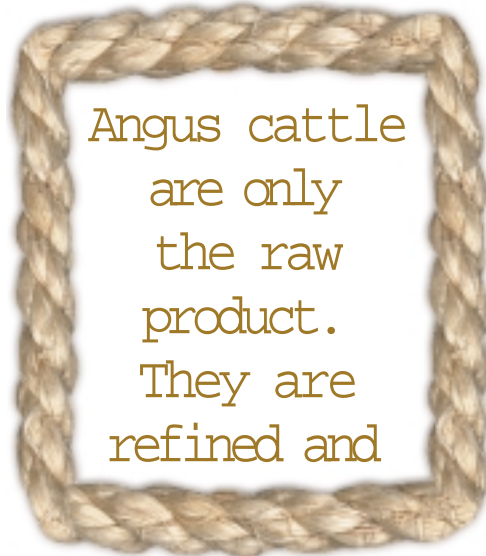
### ■ It's a people business

But Angus cattle are only the raw product. They are refined and improved, cared for, promoted and marketed by people — farmers, ranchers, mothers, fathers, sons and daughters. These people represent a full range of occupations. Over the years, Association members have included people from virtually every walk of life. This is a breed strength that never should be overlooked. In a significant way, our business is, indeed, our extended Angus family.

In a recent presentation, Linda Hill, Harvard Business School, pointed out that business today is an experiential economy — one that strives to provide an “experience” along with the traditional goals of service and product. That philosophy bodes well in the Angus business as we think about the experiences of family ties and relationships that evolve from our business.

The most obvious are the family

involvement and ties that start and are fostered by the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA). The Angus breed is the common thread for NJAA. The experience of a first newborn calf and the work ethic involved with the caring and exhibition of the animal is an experience second to none for the development of young men and women.



But it doesn't stop there. Activities and events of regional and national scope bring individuals and families together in a unique way that lasts a lifetime for the people involved. How often have I heard family members comment about the lifelong relationships started with involvement in junior Angus projects?

Other ways we share this experience include attending field days, sales and Angus shows. Again, we attend because of our involvement with the breed, but we also do so to see friends and to enjoy the fun and camaraderie. In many ways, these events offer value to our lives — they're a commonality in our belief in the Angus breed and our efforts to support the breed that brought us together. We all share the same beliefs, interests and passion for the Angus breed.

### ■ Ties to the future

In a certain way, it could be said organizations that foster youth and family ties have a better opportunity to survive than those that don't. It may be one of the reasons the Angus breed is the largest beef breed registry in the world. We are constantly building membership and leadership capacity for the future, as well as building “family ties.”

In this 2000 *Angus Journal* Herd Reference Edition themed “Family Ties,” you will experience, through a sampling of articles, the family ties that make up the Angus business. I haven't read every article in this issue, but from what I have seen, and what I have experienced in my 30 years with the Association, it will be an outstanding issue. In those years, I've also witnessed the importance of family ties and had an opportunity to share in them myself.

You will enjoy exploring the Angus breeders featured in this issue and see how they live, breed cattle and do business in their part of the country.

Certainly the family who runs a small herd in Missouri is quite different from the family that makes their entire living from registered Angus cattle in the Western range country. The family that works full time off the farm and part time with their Angus herd faces different challenges than does the family that derives virtually all its income from farming, ranching and participating in the cattle business. Yet the family ties that surround Angus people, cattle and activities know no bounds. They strengthen and unify the Angus business.

This special issue celebrates the Angus industry and also emphasizes the importance of family ties to our business. I think it's an issue you will revisit throughout the year for information, reference and entertainment. Enjoy renewing your “family ties.”

*Richard J. Spader*