



# Up Front

► by **John Crouch**, executive vice president

## Service to every member is important

*I recently received a letter from a breeder with a small herd who, as a result of drought, available feed resources and changes that had occurred in his off-farm job, had made the difficult decision to sell the majority of his herd. While it focused on his immediate situation, his letter also expressed a concern about the lack of attention paid to small-scale breeders by the staff and regional managers of the American Angus Association. I read through it several times with concern and began to sort out some of the questions he posed and the facts that surrounded them.*

### Member demographics

I would like to share with you some of the demographics of the American Angus Association. During fiscal year (FY) 2002, 16,757 members recorded 281,965 animals in the Association's Herd Book. Here's how those numbers break down.

- ▶ 68% recorded 1-10 animals
- ▶ 13% recorded 11-19 animals
- ▶ 11% recorded 20-49 animals
- ▶ 4% recorded 50-99 animals
- ▶ 3% recorded more than 100 animals

In essence, 81% of the members of the American Angus Association recorded fewer than 20 animals last year. It's clear to see that we are predominantly an Association of small-scale breeders and that every program and service we offer has to benefit small-scale

breeders, as well as large-scale breeders.

The idea that more attention is paid to larger-scale breeders surfaces several times each year and has done so since this organization was founded in 1883. It is a true observation, but not necessarily a detriment, and certainly not because the staff, regional managers and employees of the American Angus Association care less about the welfare of smaller-scale breeders. That couldn't be further from the truth.

### Service to members

The American Angus Association is a service organization. Its purpose is to comply with the bylaws and rules that have been established and to provide service to the membership, which enhances the breeding, feeding, management and marketing of

Angus cattle. And even though this is the mission we've been given, every member, no matter how large or how small an operation, has to find his or her niche within our organization and take advantage of the programs and services that are offered, focusing on the ones that benefit him or her the most.

Many large-scale breeders have a noticeable and unmistakable presence at Angus events. These are the breeders who hold annual production sales; exhibit animals at local, regional and national shows; and, consequently, are in the forefront of activity. They are the breeders who host field days and tour stops, sponsor meals at cattle and livestock events, and do a variety of other things related to our industry.

Larger-scale breeders are more prone to purchase monthly and/or periodic advertisements in the *Angus Journal*. And as a consequence of doing business, it is a normal requirement to provide service and support for these activities. Because of the level of involvement larger-scale breeders take in the events, programs and services we offer, it seems they sometimes get the lion's share of resources and benefits from the Association.

But by the same token, that same support is provided to all members of the Association, regardless of herd size, location or length of time in the business. But to receive that support and assistance, smaller-scale breeders sometimes must become involved in more activities or simply voice a need.

### Staff assistance

The Association currently has 12 regional managers who serve as the eyes and ears of

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### AMERICAN ANGUS AUXILIARY

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For a complete listing of officers, refer to page 46.

**REGIONAL MANAGERS**—Refer to page 91.

### CERTIFIED ANGUS BEEF LLC

**President**—Jim Riemann, Wooster, Ohio  
For a CAB staff listing, refer to page 84.

the Association across the country. These gentlemen work out of their homes and are charged with providing service to the membership regarding varied aspects of the beef industry.

Through time, many breeders have been led to believe that an American Angus Association staff member or regional manager would pay them a visit on their farm or ranch. And prior to the Association's acquisition of the *Angus Journal*, this was the case. However, due to the growth of our organization and the heavy and increasing schedules of sales, shows, field days, meetings and other related functions, regular herd

visits are just not possible unless there is a specific request for assistance. Even with the ever-increasing number of Angus activities and events, there is always someone in the organization ready, willing and able to assist breeders with problems ranging from paperwork to pasture. It remains difficult, however, to provide assistance and service if we are unaware of the need.

Your association staff and regional managers are no more than a phone call away. There's no doubt that it is increasingly difficult to please every breeder in our diverse and expanding ranks; however, it is still a rewarding experience to earnestly try.

So, whether you're a small- or large-scale breeder, if you have a question, a concern or a need that someone who works for the American Angus Association can help you with, don't hesitate to pick up the phone and give us a call or send us an e-mail. Feel free to contact me directly at (816) 383-5100 or [jcrouch@angus.org](mailto:jcrouch@angus.org). I can guarantee you, we'll do our best to help. We look forward to hearing from you soon.



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