



# *Roots and Wings*

*Julie Mais to serve as new editor of the Angus Journal.*

*Story & photos by Kasey Brown, special projects editor*

*Costa Rica, Italy, China, Sierra Leone — not the typical places for a Midwestern girl to study.*

*Combining convention and innovation, Julie Mais is bringing a new eye to the Angus Journal. As comfortable in boots and jeans as skinny dress pants and flats, she is taking over the reins from 20-year Editor Shauna Hermel to serve at the helm of the Angus Journal.*

*Continued on page 22*

Growing up near Warrensburg, Mo., on a row-crop and livestock operation, Mais fostered a love of cattle early. Her father gave her — and both of her siblings — a heifer when she was just 2 years old. That Shorthorn-cross named Mary started her own herd. At 8 years old, she was awarded an ag loan with which she bought her first purebred Shorthorn bred female. Progeny of that pair are still in the herd today. She owns about 20 head in partnership with her parents with a total herd size of about 45, staying connected to production agriculture even if she can't be part of the day-to-day operations.

Despite never stopping for a moment, she says she feels rested after working the cattle.

"Being around cattle is good for the soul," she says, smiling.

Mais showed Shorthorns with her siblings and attended junior nationals nearly every year of her eligibility, which fostered her love of travel. She served as the 2006-2007 National Shorthorn Lassie Queen and was active in 4-H and FFA.

She went west to study agricultural communications and journalism and animal science and industry at Kansas State University (K-State). In addition to her double major, she added a minor in international agriculture, which opened opportunities to travel abroad.

While at K-State she encountered her first exposure to publication work. She was the editor of the *Agriculturalist*. Initially attracted by graphic design, she learned to love writing and enjoyed the editorial design component.

To gain experience in a different side of communications, she interned with the American Angus Association's public relations department under Shelia Stannard (now Grobosky). Mais says she honed her writing by working on press releases, got comfortable with a camera and learned to cover large events.

"That summer was when I got my first taste for association work. I really enjoyed that," she notes.

After undergrad, she detoured from ag journalism and went to Oklahoma State University (OSU) for a master's degree in international agriculture to further scratch the travel bug's itch.

After graduation, she went east of the Mississippi

River to serve as the director of communication and managing editor for the Ohio Cattlemen's Association and the Ohio Beef Council. There, she wore many hats while splitting her time between the two organizations.

In Ohio, she managed websites; wrote press releases; and published a magazine six times a year with a team of two, managing content, designing ads and putting the magazine together. While she did have experience with all of this from school, it was trial by fire; one she managed for about three years.

## Coming back to roots

The opportunity to become the editor of the *Hereford World* in Kansas City brought Mais back to Missouri.

"It was exciting to be part of a national publication and to be an hour away from my family. I went away to college, and I went even farther away for my first job," Mais explains. "My mom always said, 'If you live here, I want you to choose it, so go out and explore and see what you want to do. If you want to move back near home, that will be your choice.' I very much felt this is what happened for me. I was really fortunate that an opportunity like that came open to take on that role and also be closer to my family."

It was certainly the right place at the right time. She met her husband shortly after moving to Kansas City.

The scale of work might have changed, but going from a state cattlemen's association to a national breed association didn't change her mission.

"Members drive the whole reason for our job and our mission. We are always working for our members; they are who we have in mind with everything we do. That will be the same here. My work at Hereford really solidified the importance of association work," she says. "Cattlemen are near and dear to my heart. I am who I am because I was raised with cattle and grew up on a farm. Many of the life lessons I've learned were by caring for livestock."

At the American Hereford Association, Mais was able to focus her attentions on the editorial efforts and as "an overseer of all things," she says with a laugh.

Both previous jobs have given her a chance to

*Continued on page 24*



## King joins *Angus Journal* team

Straight from Oklahoma State University, Lindsay King joins the new *Angus Journal* staff as an assistant editor. After earning a master's degree in animal science and an undergraduate double major in agricultural communications and animal science, King comes to Saint Joseph, Mo., with enthusiasm.

"Though my experience with cattle is framed around one lowly and angry heifer named Anna, I knew Angus would be an incredible place to launch my career in the publication world. Knowing the reputation and weight the Angus breed and brand holds both inside and out of the agricultural community pushed me to pursue a career with the business breed," King says.

Instead of growing up with cattle, King grew up riding and showing horses. Her love of writing and animal science led to her double major, and her understanding of the cattle industry grew exponentially.

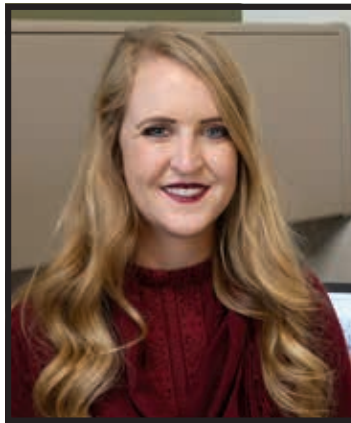
With this understanding, she started freelance writing for various publications. She also combined her class experience with practical experience as an assistant wrangler at the Focus Dude and Guest Ranch, where she worked directly with the horse herd and cared for more than 1,200 yearling heifers and cow-calf pairs.

"It was on the back of a horse in the mountains of

the Medicine Bow National Forest discussing the differences between grass-fed and grain-fed beef that I realized I knew a whole lot more than I ever thought possible about cattle," King admits. "Three months of teaching 'city slickers' how to move 1,200 head of yearling heifers left me with a strong desire to find a career within the cattle industry. That hands-on experience, combined with writing technical pieces for *Tri-State Livestock* and *The Fence Post*, prepared me for my current position with the *Angus Journal*."

While this is her first full-time job, she brings a well-rounded communications skill set and has many goals for the future.

"Something I love about my job already is the creative freedom I have, both in my writing and with various aspects of the *Journal*," she says. "My goal is to grow and expand myself as a writer, communicator and assistant editor. Thankfully, Julie and I are both competitive individuals and have lofty goals for the magazine itself on a national scale. Anything worth doing is worth doing right the first time, and I fully intend to work hard every day so the *Angus Journal* reaps the benefits of that. We are serving the producers and lovers of the Angus breed, and we want to make sure our work reflects them to the highest degree possible."



hone her skill set and prepare her for taking on the American Angus Association's flagship publication.

## To the 'dark' side

"I'm excited for a lot of things," she says as her eyes sparkle with enthusiasm. "I'm honored and proud to continue the tradition of what the *Angus Journal* has been as a leading publication in the industry. I'm looking forward to playing a role in the vision that has been set for Angus Media and the *Angus Journal*. I'm also excited about what I think this department can do for the beef industry in getting information and great content out, and chasing those leading-edge stories."

She's always seen the *Angus Journal* team covering major industry events, often the only breed association media team attending events like the Beef Improvement Federation and Applied Reproductive Strategies in Beef Cattle symposiums. She says people look to Angus as a leader in the industry.

"One thing I love about the beef industry is there's so much diversity within it, even within the breed — big operations, small operations, ones with different focuses. I'm excited to meet and share those stories of all people from those with one Angus heifer to those with thousands," she adds. "I'm excited to just jump right in and meet people, and in a sense, serve the industry by being a part of this organization."

Calling this a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity with enormous shoes to fill, she has the unique opportunity to learn from her predecessor directly. Shauna Hermel served as the editor of the *Angus Journal* and *Angus Beef Bulletin* — and all associated publications — for the past 20 years.

Facing staffing changes and needs, the timing was right to split the editorial responsibilities of the two

publications to better serve each audience. Hermel chose to pursue the *Angus Beef Bulletin* to grow it as the resource for Angus members' commercial customers.

"I've loved serving the membership as editor of the *Angus Journal* for the last 20+ years, but Kasey and I believe we can serve them more effectively by expanding the *Angus Beef Bulletin's* voice with their commercial customers," Hermel explains. "With the *Journal* in good hands, we're anxious to develop the largely untapped potential of the *Bulletin*."


Hermel is tackling a redesign of the *Angus Beef Bulletin* after recently finishing the *Angus Journal's* redesign.

"I'm looking forward to seeing the fresh ideas that Julie and her team will bring to the *Angus Journal*. They are a talented team, and they will take the *Journal* to new heights," Hermel adds.

Mais says she is looking forward to expanding upon the redesign when necessary, but emphasizes that she's committed to continuing the tradition of high-quality journalism in an accessible way.

"It has a more modern feel, and thinking about the next generation, it's going to be a great opportunity to reach them with a piece they find interesting. I'm looking forward to exploring sharing information online in a way that's easy for people to access," she notes.

Her love of travel, whether it is to small towns or international cities, has only enhanced her easy-going nature and approachability.

"Julie is truly an ideal candidate for editor of the *Angus Journal*," Hermel urges. "Growing up in the seedstock world, interning with the Association, working for a state cattlemen's group and then for a breed association, she has prepared for this opportunity her whole life. She's personable. She's professional. Our readers are going to love her." 



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