

Angus Stakes

by Shauna Rose Hermel, editor

Long-range outlook

At the summer Board Meeting, the Board of Directors of the American Angus Association adopted a new culture and vision statement and revised its mission and long-range goals (see page 266). The discussion leading to the adoption process has been thought-provoking and incredibly exciting.

It hasn't been simple, and it's taken considerable discussion. But the viewpoints brought to the table plant the seeds that develop into programs to propel the breed and its members forward. It's your/our best defense against the "Farm Crisis" Janet Mayer wrote about in the June/July issue (see page 139).

The long-range planning three years ago propelled us into the Feedlot Licensing Program (FLP) of Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB), the implementation of expected progeny differences (EPDs) based on ultrasound, the Commercial Relations Department and the Angus Beef Record Service (BRS).

By delving into ultrasound EPDs, we've opened the door to a whole new tier of bulls' being evaluated for carcass merit ... and at a younger age. That shortens the generation interval for genetic selection (see page 63). And we're finding even greater heritabilities than with in-plant measurements.

Through the Commercial Relations Department, we are developing programs that will help commercial producers using Angus genetics prosper, including identifying feedlots that have an interest in feeding Angus cattle (see page 38 of "Feeding Options"), providing avenues for marketing Angus genetics through the Angus Resource Clearinghouse Network (ARCNet), and developing a performance recordkeeping program to help commercial producers identify the cattle that work and those that don't (see page 34 of "Feeding Options").

The licensees of the FLP have promised their dedicated support in feeding Angus cattle to achieve the goals of the CAB Program (see page 22 of "Feeding Options"). There's so much we need to learn about feeding Angus genetics and about feeding an individual herd's genetics. These partners provide a tremendous resource.

Packers and alliances have developed grids especially for Angus. CAB® is nearly recognized as a quality grade in itself. And if you doubt the loyalty of the restaurants to the brand, you should attend the CAB National Conference in Vancouver, Canada, Aug. 24-26. Their

enthusiasm and success stories prove we're on the right track in including carcass merit among our selection criteria.

Tie all those things together and you have a powerful system that allows for producer independence but provides avenues for greater coordination and greater focus.

That coordination can increase communication among industry sectors, allowing the sharing of information for everyone's benefit — unlocking the data stronghold.

Think about it. Ultrasound will allow us to know more about our seedstock earlier, giving better information to commercial producers. With herds enrolled in Angus BRS, commercial producers can benchmark their herds and evaluate individual cows for their contributions.

Through commercial relations and the FLP, you can help your customers connect with a feedlot that is interested in feeding Angus cattle and vested in getting information back to the Association and the producer. Those feedlots also will recognize the importance of known genetics and registered sires accompanied by a performance pedigree. Those feeders will have stronger connections with packers who also have a vested interest in sharing that information.

Think of the leap commercial producers will make when they have the power to plug in breeding information, calf performance, feedlot performance, and health and carcass characteristics of progeny, then tie that back to dam and sire. They can identify the cows that meet multiple standards and those that may not satisfy one sector or another.

Enabling commercial producers to identify the genetics that can do it all and those that can't will allow the whole industry to take a giant step forward. The better they can describe their calves, the better the feedlot can feed them and the better the product coming from the packinghouse will satisfy the end consumer. That can secure our future in the industry.



Editor's note: *Special thanks to FLP licensee Sandhills Cattle Feeding of Bassett, Neb., for allowing field editor Troy Smith to do a photo shoot at the yard to help illustrate this year's "Feeding Options" section.*

Congratulations to BIF winners

Here's a news flash from Wichita, Kan. I'm here at the Hyatt Regency at the Beef Improvement Federation's (BIF's) 32nd annual meeting. It's always one of the best meetings of the year. I'd say folks are starting to realize that. With 688 registrations, attendance set an all-time record. I want to mention some of the Angus folks who received special recognition at this year's conference.

The 2000 **Seedstock Producer of the Year** is **Fink Beef Genetics**, Manhattan, Kan., operated by Galen and Lori Fink, along with their daughter, Megan.

Angus producers honored as seedstock nominees include **Blue Ston Farms**, John Curtain, Blue Mound, Ill.; **Eagle Pass Ranch LP**, Kent Kineman and Steve Munger, Highmore, S.D.; **Homestead Farm**, Banks and Margo Herndon, Hathechubee, Ala.; **Locust Level Farms**, Mike and T.K. McDowell, Vernon Hill, Va.; **Rotert Angus** and Midwestern Cattle Services, John and Betty Rotert and family, Montrose, Mo.; and **Sodak Angus Ranch**, Vaughn Meyer and family, Reva, S.D.

This year's **Commercial Producer of the Year** is Bill Tucker, Tucker Family Farms, Amherst County, Va. The Tuckers concentrate much of their efforts on the marketing and development of their "Target 2000" replacement line of ¾ Angus x ¼ Gelbvieh females.

The **Pioneer Award** recognizes individuals who have made lasting contributions to the genetic improvement of beef cattle. The honorees were **Dave Nichols**, Nichols Farm Ltd., Bridgewater, Iowa; **Robert Schalles**, professor emeritus at Kansas State University, Manhattan; and **Harlan Ritchie**, animal scientist, Michigan State University, East Lansing.

The **Continuing Service Award** was bestowed upon **Ron Bolze**, director of progeny tests for carcass merit, Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB), Colby, Kan.; and **Jed Dillard**, animal scientist, Florida A&M University.

The **Ambassador Award**, bestowed upon a livestock journalist for contributions to the beef industry, was given to **Wes Ishmael**, Clear Point Communications, Benbrook, Texas.