

from the office

LEAD IN

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There are few things in the Angus business that are more satisfying than to attend a junior Angus event. That's probably why so many of the summer Angus activities revolve around youth and youth-related activities.

Those of you who have boys and girls involved in Angus youth projects and who support and encourage these activities must be congratulated. If you have youngsters who will soon be old enough to participate in these activities, I urge you to find out as much about them as possible and then to be sure your boy or girl gets introduced to these programs early, and properly, and receives every encouragement.

Family involvement is the key to success in Angus youth projects as it is in so many other worthwhile youth activities. But success goes beyond the family. Every Angus breeder can offer encouragement and support to youngsters. It can be as simple as insuring that young people get a quality heifer as a first project. You can also spend enough time talking to the youngster and the family to be sure that they know how to care for the heifer properly. You can give them ap-

plications for membership in the Association and other Association literature and see that they are invited and accompanied to the next meeting of the local or state junior Angus association. And, when the time comes you can offer to help get the heifer bred to a good bull.

Your Association knows the value of youth encouragement and involvement. It was the first Association in the country to realize the importance of junior activities. The first Director of Junior Activities was employed in 1956. Not much later the first state junior Angus association in the nation was organized in Missouri, and Eddie Sydenstricker of Mexico, Missouri, currently a member of the American Angus Assn. Board of Directors, was elected its first president. Today, all but the smallest states on the continent have junior Angus associations and there are scores of state and local junior groups as well.

The number of junior members of the American Angus Assn. now stands at more than 7,700 and there are at least another 2,000 or so youngsters under 21 years of age who are listed as life or regular members of the Association. The quality of training and experience young people receive in Angus youth programs is reflected in the conversion rate. Currently, some 33% of all junior members convert their junior membership to a regular membership when they reach their 21st birthday.

Just as a reminder, here is what the American Angus Assn. offers in the way of junior activities.

First of all, every active junior member, or someone in his or her household, receives the *ANGUS JOURNAL*. That alone makes junior membership a tremendous bargain.

Second, the American Angus Assn. sponsors shows that give every junior member an opportunity to exhibit Angus cattle on a state, regional or national basis. This competition is a powerful influence on educating and developing skills of young cattlemen. The shows also encourage youngsters to become involved in keeping Angus Herd Im-

provement Records by offering added premiums for heifers that are properly enrolled in AHIR.

Third, the Association encourages participation in leadership projects. The National Junior Angus Assn. was formed for this purpose. The Board members to this national organization are elected by young delegates from nearly every state in the union, and they have proven to be valuable assets as they assist in Angus shows, field days, meetings and other activities. The National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest and the numerous state and local showmanship contests this event has spawned, provides a learning experience to the very young children who enter and participate and in the national contest it is a showcase for the most talented junior members of the American Angus Assn.

Fourth, there is a job placement program for young Angus enthusiasts. The program, run by the Director of Junior Activities, brings together young people who would like to work on an Angus farm or ranch outside their home territory and herd owners who need experienced summer help and who are willing to give a young person new experience.

Fifth, there is the National Junior Angus Recognition program. Its three levels of achievement, bronze, silver and gold, recognize the accomplishments of young Angus breeders on progressively higher levels. Most Angus youngsters who are conscientious, who work hard, and who keep good records can attain the bronze award. It takes harder work and much more effort and dedication to attain the silver award, and only the elite of the junior Angus members can earn the coveted gold award pin.

It is easy to overlook the value of these junior programs to the success of the Angus business. But without them the Angus breed would not be where it is today. If you have had a hand in any part of junior Angus activities, you should be proud of what has been accomplished in these past 26 years.

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