

Louisville

Seven Vie for Board

Delegates will select five at the Annual Meeting in November.

As of Aug. 15, seven members of the American Angus Association had announced they are running for the five positions available on the Association Board of Directors. Those elected on Monday, Nov. 12, at the Annual Meeting in Louisville, Ky., will serve a three-year term. At press time, the following people had announced their candidacies; two are incumbents running for a second term. The candidates' biographical sketches are presented here in alphabetical order.

■ CHRIS EARL

Yorkville, Ill.

Chris Earl was born on Oct. 10, 1966, the second of seven children, to John and Mary Pat Earl of DeKalb, Ill. He married Krista Schneider in 1989, and they have six children who range in age from 11 to 3 years old.

In 1984, Chris enrolled at Western Illinois University and was a walk-on with the football team. He earned a scholarship in his freshman year, was a starter in his sophomore year and was selected as a team captain his senior year.

He also decided during his football career to take the university up on receiving a good education. He earned his bachelor's degree in agricultural business, with a specialization in management and a minor in animal science.

At the end of his college career, with the hopes of a professional football career dashed, the need to find an avenue to channel his competitive spirit and passion for achievement led him to choose a career in the Angus cattle business.

In 1989, George and Mary Block and Judd Baldrige hired Chris as herdsman for Sunny Valley Angus Farm in Yorkville, Ill. Following that, in 1994, he was promoted to

purebred Angus manager and, in 1998, appointed vice president in charge of all cattle and farming operations at Sunny Valley Farm (SVF).

Chris is appreciative and proud of the learning opportunities he has had at Sunny Valley and of the success of their purebred

Angus program. Sunny Valley has been in the Angus business for 30 years and has conducted 12 annual production sales, placing SVF genetics in herds throughout the United States, Australia and South America.

Sunny Valley, through their private sales and their relationship with G-Bar Angus in California, currently markets more than 100 purebred bulls/year.

Through their feedlot operation, they annually market 700-800 steers and heifers, many of which are sired by Sunny Valley bulls.

Chris has learned that successful businesses are built upon relationships. He is eager to point out that the relationship with his embryologist has lasted 14 years and his relationship with the management company that handles his production sales has lasted 12 years. He also has relationships that have lasted for more than a decade with customers who purchased seedstock,

finished steers and heifers, and commercial bulls.

Through those relationships and his position as vice president, he has learned to blend ideas from the Sunny Valley ownership and staff, other Angus breeders, and other industry leaders into a successful farming and purebred cattle operation.

Over the years, Sunny Valley has been at the forefront in the use of the most sophisticated technologies, including artificial insemination (AI), embryo transfer (ET), ultrasound and the American Angus Association's genetic evaluation program. In recent years, Chris has focused the SVF breeding program on the use of expected progeny differences (EPDs), individual performance data and functionally sound cattle that meet the needs of the commercial cow-calf producer, feedlot operator and consumer.

The feedlot at Sunny Valley has provided a great opportunity for Chris to evaluate their product. And the demand for and success of SVF genetics throughout the United States and abroad is a testament to Chris's Angus breeding program.

His experience working with all phases of the beef cattle business and in managing one of the largest and most successful Angus operations has given him the background and interest to serve the Angus breed and its membership on the Association Board of Directors. Chris's ability to work with people equals his ability to select and produce Angus cattle, and he is the kind of person who would listen to his constituency and make solid business decisions based on their input and the future of the Angus breed and the beef cattle industry. He is hardworking, driven and highly respected for his honesty and integrity.



Chris Earl

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In summary, Chris has the knowledge, talent and experience to serve the Angus breed and its membership on the Association Board. He has traveled throughout the United States, visiting with his peers; he knows their concerns and challenges and would represent them well on the Board.

He listens, thinks and speaks his convictions with authority. He feels an obligation to the people who have helped him, and he is willing to gather the facts and carefully analyze and aggressively implement the ideas he believes are important to the success of the membership and the Angus cattle business.

▣ **BEN EGGERS**

Mexico, Mo.

The Missouri Angus Association Board of Directors unanimously endorses Ben Eggers, Mexico, Mo., as a candidate for re-election to the American Angus Association Board of Directors.

Ben grew up on a diversified family farm in southeast Missouri near Jackson. He purchased his first registered Angus female and joined the American Angus Association in 1964. He has owned registered Angus cattle ever since. As the Missouri 4-H, FFA and junior Angus programs began to shape his future, Ben took high-individual honors in the 1970 state FFA livestock-judging contest. Also in 1970, he was awarded the Missouri Angus Auxiliary scholarship.

A National Merit Scholar, Ben attended Southeast Missouri State University for two and a half years with emphases on mathematics and agriculture. But cattle were in his blood and provided a challenge the classroom couldn't touch.

He set out to gain more experience in the real world, working for the Missouri-based firms of Millikan Stock Farm, Pfeiffer Farms, Macon Angus Ranch and Gibraltar Cattle Co. While at Macon Angus Ranch, Ben was able to further his education in animal science at the University of Missouri.

He joined the team at Sydenstricker Angus Farms (now Sydenstricker Genetics) in November 1982, working with the cow herd. His position has evolved to manager, and today he is responsible for all facets of production, herd health, nutrition, genetics, advertising and promotion, as well as

managing the annual production sale. His philosophy of collecting and presenting all available performance information in a clear and straightforward manner has made their sale book and their sale one of the stalwarts of the industry.

As manager of Sydenstricker, Ben has developed one of the most progressive carcass evaluation programs in the industry. Starting in 1988, 34 sires have been evaluated for carcass traits, and 11 more are "in the pipeline."

Ben has printed all available interim carcass expected progeny differences (EPDs) in the Sydenstricker sale book since they became available in 1993. His belief that carcass traits are just as important as other performance traits was rewarded in 1997, as he and Eddie Sydenstricker were awarded the Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB)

"Commitment to Excellence" award for seedstock producers. That same balanced-trait philosophy has enabled the herd to be a leader in semen sales, both domestically and internationally.

In 2001, they were awarded the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Seedstock Producer of the Year Award and changed the name of the operation to Sydenstricker Genetics to reflect more accurately their commitment as a full-service genetics provider.

Seeking a way to help his commercial customers profit from superior carcass and growth genetics, Ben was part of a steering committee that helped organize the Farmland Supreme Beef Alliance, and Sydenstricker Angus Farms became one of the original seedstock partners in that alliance. To further his involvement in the commercial beef industry, Ben and his wife, Darla, have partnered with customers on pens of steers fed through the alliance.

Ben has been active in both Angus and beef industry issues. He has served as chairman of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Seedstock Council and as president of the Missouri Cattlemen's Association. A member of the NCBA and its predecessor — the National Cattlemen's Association (NCA) — since 1977, he has served on the board of directors and on the Grading, Live Cattle Marketing, Resolutions, International Markets, Membership and

Nominating committees. He participated in the NCA Young Cattlemen's Conference (YCC) in 1991.

He has been an active member of the Missouri Angus Association since 1973 and has served on the board of the Missouri Beef Industry Council and the Missouri Beef Cattle Improvement Association. Special appointments have included U.S. Sen. "Kit" Bond's Agricultural Advisory Committee and Gov. Mel Carnahan's Advisory Council on Agriculture.

Ben is completing his first three-year term on the Association Board of Directors, having served on the Activities, Finance, Administrative and Long-Range Planning, and Industry Relations committees. He has served one year on the Board of Angus Productions Inc. (API) and serves as the Association representative on the NCBA board.

Ben's wife, the former Darla Sprake, is also a product of the Missouri 4-H and junior Angus programs. They share a deep-rooted commitment to Angus cattle and the beef industry.

"Angus cattle and agriculture have been the driving force and the only business I've been involved with in my lifetime. I have enjoyed the challenges of my first term on the Board and look forward to working with this dedicated group of breeders for another term," Ben says.



Ben Eggers

▣ **MARK GARDINER**

Ashland, Kan.

The Kansas Angus Association has endorsed unanimously Mark Gardiner as their candidate for election to the American Angus Association Board of Directors.

Mark is an integral part of a five-generation, family-owned operation near Ashland, Kan., that began in 1885. Today, Gardiner Angus Ranch supports the families of Henry Gardiner and his sons, Greg, Mark and Garth, who all are partners in the operation.

The ranch includes 21,000 acres of native range, dryland wheat and alfalfa. The cattle operation has expanded from marketing 50 bulls in 1977 to more than 1,200 bulls sold in an annual production sale and by private

treaty in 2001. The total artificial insemination (AI) breeding of 950 registered females is augmented by an embryo transfer (ET) program that includes 2,000 transfers to commercial cows on the ranch and in cooperator herds.

Since graduating from Kansas State University (K-State) in 1983, Mark has served as a district director, board member and president of the Kansas Angus Association. He is active in the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) and has been Clark County director for the Kansas Livestock Association (KLA). Mark is currently the chairman of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Seedstock Council, after serving as a member and vice chairman.

Perhaps his most innovative involvement in the beef industry has been as a founding and charter board member of U.S. Premium Beef (USPB). Along with six other Kansas cattlemen, Mark formulated a plan and helped to establish the first successful, producer-owned, closed marketing cooperative for finished cattle in the country.

USPB is co-owner of Farmland National Beef Packing Co., the fourth-largest packer in the industry. Since the inception of USPB in December 1997, the program has processed 2.3 million cattle on its value-based grid. The members of USPB have realized \$107.8 million in premiums, dividends and stock appreciation, for an average added value of \$46.87/head.

Mark is often called upon to be a spokesman for the beef industry. He has been a featured speaker at more than 50 meetings of producer groups in 20 states and Canada during the past three years.

Mark says the most powerful, accurate information source in the world is the American Angus Association *Sire Evaluation Report*. He often relates the story of how his father bred cattle for 33 years without the sire summary, and no matter how hard he tried, he made no genetic change. Henry became frustrated.

Beginning in the fall of 1980, when the first Angus Field Data Report (sire summary) was published, the whole story changed. For the first time, all breeding

decisions at Gardiner Angus Ranch were based on the summary that accurately compared Angus bulls for economically important traits.

Mark has continued the tradition begun by his father and relies heavily on expected progeny differences (EPDs) to chart all matings. High-accuracy, progeny-proven sires have produced thousands of calves at Gardiner Angus Ranch. Every animal on the ranch is the result of AI or ET. Gardiner Angus Ranch is a living example of the economic reality of EPDs. Mark emphatically claims, "There would have been no ranch for us to come home to if my dad had not chosen to use EPDs."



Mark Gardiner

Mark is married to the former Eva Stumpff, a veterinarian who shares

Mark's love for ranching. They have three sons: Ransom and Cole, age 8, and Quanah, age 2. The boys are active on the ranch and in 4-H. Mark sees as his greatest challenge in life to provide a sound business for the boys to take over if they choose. To achieve this, nothing is more important than ensuring the viability of the beef industry.

"Angus is in the driver's seat of the beef business," Mark says. He is emphatic that Angus breeders, especially the Association Board, share a tremendous opportunity and responsibility. Board members must provide strong leadership to the Association to ensure that Angus

members can compete and win in the business today and in the future.

To do this won't be easy. Only a strong Board willing to make difficult and sometimes unpopular decisions will enhance existing programs and provide the vision necessary to create new opportunities for the Angus breed. Mark's style has always been to aggressively pursue every opportunity presented to his family's business. If he becomes a member of the Board, he pledges to do the same for all Angus breeders.

■ JOT HARTLEY

Vinita, Okla.

The Oklahoma Angus Association has endorsed Jot Hartley as a candidate for reelection to the America Angus Association Board of Directors. Jot is completing his first three-year term on the Board, where he has served on the Public Relations (two years), Industry Relations (three years) and Breed Improvement (one year) committees.

Jot is a former director and past president of the Oklahoma Angus Association and a former director and president of Oklahoma Beef Inc. (OBI), a central bull test station at Stillwater, Okla. Jot is also a member of the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association.

Jot and his wife of 28 years, Renee, along with their sons, Travis and Jimmy, own and operate Spur Ranch, a diversified cattle operation consisting of 400 purebred Angus females and 200 commercial Angus females. Spur Ranch annually hosts the World Series Sale, one of the top performance-tested Angus bull and commercial Angus female sales in the central United States. Spur Ranch bulls are in use in top commercial herds in Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas,

Arkansas and Texas.

Jot was raised on the family ranch west of Vinita and graduated from Oklahoma State University with a degree in finance. He also holds a law degree from the University of Oklahoma and is a licensed attorney, admitted to practice in several state and federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court.

His charitable activities include service as president-elect and a member of the board of directors of Home of Hope, a care provider for mentally handicapped adults.

While president of the Oklahoma Angus Association, Jot initiated a series of educational and informational programs for the membership and helped stabilize the financial status of the association. From 1990 through 1995, Spur Ranch exported live Wagyu-Angus-cross stocker calves to Japan directly from the ranch via airfreight under contract with Ito-Ham Foods, a Japanese conglomerate.

Jot's father, Bob Hartley, was a pioneer in the introduction and use of performance



Jot Hartley

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evaluation techniques and was a founding member of OBI and Performance Registry International. As a result, the Spur Ranch herd has been enrolled in the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) program since its inception, and the data have been utilized in all herd management decisions.

On his candidacy for the Association Board, Jot states: "Spur Ranch is totally committed to improvement of the Angus breed through performance-based evaluation. The commercial cow-calf operator is our lifeblood. During the past three years, I have tried to provide services and programs through the Association to add value to the commercial calf and, in turn, our registered Angus cattle. I hope to be able to continue to bring my experience and expertise to the American Angus Association Board of Directors and help maintain Angus cattle as the top breed in the world!"

▣ JAY P. KING

Rock Falls, Ill.

The Illinois Angus Association Board of Directors unanimously endorses Jay P. King as a candidate for election to the American Angus Association Board of Directors.

Jay is a lifelong resident of Illinois, having graduated from Rock Falls High School. He also attended Sauk Valley Community College and the University of Illinois before returning to the family farm.

Jay and his wife, Chris, reside in Rock Falls with their two children, their children's spouses and their 10 grandchildren. Jay is now affiliated with his daughter and son-in-law, Kathy and Gary Sandrock, and their two sons, Ben and Matt Sandrock, in the farming and cattle operation of Sandrock Farms, Sauk Valley Angus.

The farm includes more than 10,800 acres with 36 center-pivot-irrigation systems. Much of the ground under irrigation is double-cropped, and they grow corn, soybeans, sweet corn, peas and wheat.

Sauk Valley Angus is one of the state's largest Angus seedstock producers, maintaining approximately 275 cows. They have been enrolled in the Angus Herd



Jay P. King

Improvement Records (AHIR) program for many years, relying heavily on the use of expected progeny differences (EPDs) and artificial insemination (AI), with the annual goal of a 100% AI calf crop. Sauk Valley Angus conducts two production sales each year, with a female sale in early December and a bull sale in late March.

Jay's father, W. Wilson King, purchased his first purebred Angus cattle in September 1945 from Lucore Angus Ranch in Arriba, Colo. Jay was involved with his Angus cattle in 4-H and actively participated in the showings of Illinois and the surrounding states. He also participated in FFA while in high school, serving as a district and state officer.

Jay's Angus herd was one of the first to be enrolled in the University of Illinois Beef Performance Testing Program in the late 1960s. He started his own production sales in the early 1980s, with one highlight being that of accompanying a plane load of bulls to Brazil that he had sold to numerous farmers and ranchers there.

His involvement with the Angus community included being a charter member of the Illinois Junior Angus

Association in 1960 and serving on its first board of directors. Jay's children, Kathy and Jay Jr., both represented Illinois in the National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest.

The Illinois Junior Angus Association has recognized Jay for his contributions to its program. Jay is a member of the Illinois Angus Association, having served on its board of directors and as president of the board in 1996, as did his father in 1963.

Jay's community involvement includes having been a school board member for 17 years, serving as president for two years. He also served on the local bank board and was active in the local

United Way campaign. Jay was a charter member of the Mid-Continent Livestock Exposition, serving on its board for more than 20 years and in the position of treasurer for 17 years. He currently is a member of the Illinois Beef Association and

serves as vice chairman of the Sterling (Ill.) Chamber of Commerce Agribusiness Committee.

As a lifelong Angus breeder and farmer, Jay would like to serve on the Association Board to give back to the breed of cattle that has been so important in the lives of his family and to the friends he has made over the years through his Angus activities.

▣ BOB LAFLIN

Olsburg, Kan.

Angus breeders across America support Bob Laflin as a candidate for the American Angus Association Board of Directors. His election would make him the third

generation of the Laflin family to serve on the Board.

Through 101 years, five generations and two states, the Laflin family has worked to turn the West black. Heritage is deeply woven into the Laflin fabric. In 1900, E.B. Laflin, Bob's grandfather, purchased his first registered Angus herd from Escher and Ryan in Iowa and thus became one of the first breeders of Angus cattle in



Bob Laflin

Nebraska. E.B. served on the Association's Board and as its vice president.

Upon E.B.'s death, his son L.E. (Bob's father) assumed management of the operation. Like his father, L.E. was an active Association leader. He was elected to the Board in the late '30s.

Bob graduated from the University of Nebraska, and a short time later, he was called to serve his country. During his military career, he served on the staff of Gen. John Wickham Jr., the Army chief of staff. In later years, Bob also took time to serve on the staff of U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback. Bob always has believed in good government at every level.

After his military career, Bob returned to raise children and cattle. He married Barbara Arendt, and with their four children, they carried on the Angus heritage. All four were active in the Kansas Junior Angus and National Junior Angus associations and competed successfully in the National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest.

Four grandchildren, Cody and Jeana

Sankey and Josh and Clinton Laflin, participated in the 2001 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS). The tradition continues.

In the June-July 2000 *Angus Journal*, Dean Hurlbut, former director of activities for the American Angus Association, was quoted as saying, "Bob is a true ambassador for Angus cattle. He goes to conferences. He goes to shows. He spends his money on advertising to let people know what he is doing on the ranch. He is simply a promoter of Angus cattle."

On Nov. 15, 1999, L.E. & E.B. Laflin were inducted into the Angus Heritage Foundation by the Association. On May 10, 2000, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recognized the Bob Laflin family with a Lifetime Achievement Award for 100 years of service to the cattle industry. Jim Baker, administrator of packers and stockyards, said, "We were so pleased to honor the Laflins for their commitment to the Angus breed and agriculture."

On Aug. 19, 2000, the Bob Laflin family celebrated their 100th anniversary in the Angus business with an all-day extravaganza. Nearly 1,000 people from 35 states and British Columbia attended. 2001 now marks a new century for the Laflins to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Bob has been a hands-on, ranch-oriented breeder, with many firsts to his credit. He was the *first* breeder in Kansas to own and feature a certified meat sire. He was the *first* breeder in Kansas to place his bulls on a feed test in the '60s, when Oklahoma State University and Performance Registry International (PRI) began their feed conversion program. He was the *first* breeder in Kansas to hold a performance-tested bull sale. Those sales have been continuously held for 35 years.

Bob's herd has been on a strong performance, carcass and expected progeny difference (EPD) program. Consequently, his bulls have been in great demand in the cow country of the South and Southwest. The Laflin local trade has always been strong.

Being a grassroots breeder himself, Bob wants to "stand in the gap of every Angus breeder across America" — small or large. At present, only 15 states have representatives on the Association Board. That leaves 35 states unrepresented. If elected, Bob will represent all Angus breeders who belong to the Association.

Bob's Angus heritage drives his desire to

serve on the Board. While it would be a personal honor for him to be the third generation of the Laflin family to serve on the Board, it would be an even greater honor for Bob to be selected because of the confidence the membership has in his abilities to lead and to contribute.

▣ RICHARD C. TOKACH *Saint Anthony, N.D.*

The North Dakota Angus Association has unanimously endorsed Richard C. Tokach as a candidate for election to the American Angus Association Board of Directors.

Richard was raised on a registered and commercial Angus operation near Saint Anthony, N.D. Active in 4-H at an early age, he showed Angus heifers and steers at numerous county fairs and shows throughout North Dakota. Many of his present-day Angus females trace back to heifers that he showed in 4-H.

Richard graduated from North Dakota State University (NDSU) in 1979 with a bachelor's degree in animal

science. While at NDSU, he was employed at the beef barns, was a member of the Saddle and Sirloin Club and Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity, and was president of the Livestock Judging Club. He also was active on the meats-judging team and the junior and senior livestock-judging teams.

Richard received the J.H. Sheppard Award, which is given annually to the member of the senior livestock-judging team who earns the highest average at the intercollegiate livestock judging contests. He also was active in the Saddle and Sirloin Club's Little I, serving as beef department manger, and won the overall showmanship award his senior year.

Upon graduation from NDSU, Richard returned to the family ranch. He slowly began expanding his own cow herd and renting more land. To earn additional money, he clipped cattle for production sales throughout North Dakota and northern South Dakota. Richard also has judged county fairs, achievement days, feeder-calf shows, breed shows and regional fairs in a three-state area.

Richard married Kathy Graner in 1982.

They have three children: Rebecca, 14; Ben, 11; and Renae, 6. The children have been active in 4-H, the North Dakota Junior Angus Association and the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA). Rebecca and Ben showed heifers at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) each of the past two years and enjoy the Angus Computer Cow-Calf Game.

Richard always has believed in supporting and taking an active role in community and industry organizations. He has served as a board member for his local church; as a board member and president for the Morton County Fair, the Morton County Farm Bureau and the North Dakota Angus Association; and board and executive

council member of the North Dakota Private Grazing Lands Coalition.

He also has served as a board member, brand board member and past president of the North Dakota Stockmen's Association, along with being a past board member of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA).

Richard has donated his time in support of youth activities. He has served as an advisor for the North Dakota Junior Angus Association for the past 10 years. He also has been a livestock-judging coach for the Morton County 4-H and Mandan FFA teams for the past 22 years. Richard is especially proud that the majority of those youth have advanced beyond state competition and represented North Dakota on a national level.

Richard and his younger brother, Brad, and their families operate Tokach Angus Ranch, consisting of 550 head of registered Angus females on 9,500 acres of owned and leased land.

They have been strong supporters of performance testing, and their cow herd has been enrolled in the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) program since 1963. In 1976, an artificial insemination (AI) program was established. Accurate performance data, expected progeny differences (EPDs) and ultrasound data are used to select AI sires and replacement heifers. Currently, more than 450 head are synchronized and pass through the AI chutes each spring.



Richard C. Tokach

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The Angus Herd Management System (AHMS) and its successor — the Angus Information Management Software (AIMS) — have been used extensively over the years and are a great help in sale-book preparation, data transfer and registrations. All farm and financial records have been computerized since 1994.

In addition to private treaty sales, the Tokachs have hosted an annual production sale for the past 26 years. Their mission

statement reads, “To produce volume numbers of low-birth-weight, high-growth seedstock that excel in the economically important traits that are vital to the success of the commercial ranchers of this region.”

Believing that personal contact and communication are the keys to a successful purebred operation, the Tokachs keep in touch with their customers through a toll-free telephone number, a Web site, Christmas cards, presale fliers and a

personalized post-sale letter.

Richard is excited about being part of the Angus business and about the future of the Angus breed and the Association. He states: “It is no secret that the Angus breed and the American Angus Association are looked upon as the true leaders among the entire beef cattle industry. We must do everything we can to maintain and expand upon this enviable position in the years to come.” 