

# Pen to Paper

*Angus juniors convey their stories, passions and dreams through written word at the NJAS.*

*compiled by Megan Silveira, editorial intern*

From pens containing beloved, black-hided show heifers to stark white sheets of paper awaiting a chance to hold the words of bright minds, National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members have found several facets to express themselves.

When not in the show barn with their cattle, contestants of the NJAA Creative Writing Contest at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) held in Madison, Wis., from July 7-13 were using the written word to leave their mark on the cattle industry.

The Creative Writing Contest is designed to encourage the enhancement of communication skills amongst junior members. The event is co-sponsored by the NJAA and the Events and Education Department of the American Angus Association and hosted 48 competitors this year.

Junior entries were asked to use 300-500 words to describe their first week of life as a newborn calf.

Using 600-800 words, intermediate entrants explained their roles in the Angus industry to their non-agricultural friends.

Senior entries answered the question "One of your friends mentions to you they are thinking of beginning Meatless Mondays. How do you respond?" in 1,000-1,200 words.

Alexis Koelling, Curryville, Mo.; Marcie Harward, Richfield, N.C.; and Morgan Blommel, Dade City, Fla. were the victors in each division, and their winning pieces can be found below.

With talents stretching beyond the show ring, these NJAA members found a new pen, one containing ink instead of cattle, to help showcase their talents.

## Determination

*by Alexis Koelling, junior winner*

Wow! I am not sure what happened, but I have been in a very dark place for nine months. Suddenly, I feel as if I'm getting licked to death by my mother. The bright sun's rays shining down on me feel warm and comforting. I am surprised by the sensation as I recognize the sounds from before I was born. My mother had me in a small pen in a barn. Directly in front and behind me are other calves standing and walking. I stole their idea and decided to try it out for myself... failure. That does not settle well with me. Luckily, the other two calves hadn't noticed my failure to stand.

I decided to try again later and go back to sleep. I awoke famished, but as luck would have it, my mom was beside me and let me eat without having to stand! Thank goodness I didn't have to fail again. As I ate, I only hoped the other calves saw my stunt of eating while laying down. As I finished my meal, the farmer rushed in and started to move us out into a lot with more cows and babies. Without any embarrassment from me, the farmer was very strong and generously carried me to the lot. The farmer plopped me down and all I could think was, everyone is going to think that I can't walk. Right then,

I decided that I would stand up and walk. I told myself, I cannot fall this time. This time truly matters. I used all my strength, and I stood all by myself! That strength had to have come from the yummy milk from my mom. She was so proud of me. She bawled so lovingly and even gave me a lick. I felt so good about myself, I even took a few steps! I quickly looked to see who was watching... but to my surprise, nobody even noticed.

I quickly found my balance, made some friends and loved my new life. Over the next week, I played with friends and took naps. The most

---

exciting day was when the farmer came to move us to a big and wide pasture. I was so excited to explore this new place. However, before he moved us he gave me my shots to keep me healthy and pierced my ear with a big floppy white thing

with numbers. I tried to lose it, but all the other calves have it which helps me fit in the group. During my exploration, I found other calves on the other side of the fence. Every day, I watch a girl who puts their feet in a special way and gives them

baths. I told my mom, one day I am going to be just like them, perfect in appearance and extraordinary in my disposition. She lovingly licked me, telling me I could do anything I wanted in life if I was determined, just like the day I learned to walk.

---

## *Building a Cake in the Angus Industry*

*by Marcie Harward, intermediate winner*

Have you ever eaten a tender, flavorful steak that was branded as Certified Angus Beef? If so, you have been a part of the industry we call the “Angus industry!” Angus itself is defined as a type of breed in beef cattle, and the industry is defined as a group of people coming together to produce a product. The Angus industry strives to serve the beef cattle industry and increase the production of high quality beef that will satisfy consumers through advancements in technology, cattle, programs and leadership skills. While there are many roles that make up the Angus industry, I am personally involved as an Angus breeder, marketer and advocate.

There are many roles for people in the Angus industry, including being an Angus seedstock breeder, raising Angus cattle for beef, raising production replacement females, working for a media source and many more. In order for the Angus industry to be successful, all of these factors have to work together. Let’s first look at where it all begins with the Angus breeders. If we compare the Angus industry to baking a cake, the Angus breeders would be considered the cake mix. The mix of the cake is the foundation of the cake or what

you start with at the beginning. Therefore, Angus breeders are the foundation of the Angus industry. Without the Angus breeders, you would not be able to enjoy the tasty Certified Angus Beef steak you have on your dinner plate. Without the foundation of these Angus cattle, there would be nothing to market or sell. Now you can see why Angus breeders are a crucial element in the Angus industry. As an Angus breeder myself, we strive to keep breeding Angus cattle that will perform not only in the herd, but also for other breeders. We also strive to produce cattle that will perform in a feedyard and will qualify for the coveted Certified Angus Beef brand so the consumer can enjoy a tasty meal!

Next, we have the other ingredients that go with the cake mix. These ingredients consist of items such as eggs, salt, and extra chocolate chips! Marketing the Angus breed and advocating for the Angus industry can be compared to this step when making a cake. Just like the cake will not be very tasty without the extra ingredients, the Angus industry can not be successful without the elements of marketing and advocating. Through marketing and advocating, we are able to teach

other breeders and consumers what the Angus industry has to offer. I see each and every day as an opportunity to advocate for the Angus industry. Whether I am talking to cattlemen at a conference or giving a speech, I share the goals and my knowledge of the Angus industry at every opportunity I have. For my Angus herd, marketing is essential to the herd’s long term success. From sharing with people why they should buy my Angus cattle over a Hereford or why Angus cattle will be more profitable in a feedyard than any other breed, I utilize marketing on a daily basis. Marketing and advocating are an important part of the Angus “cake mix,” not only for the Angus industry as a whole, but also to tell how the Angus industry can benefit both cattlemen and consumers.

The last step in baking a cake is the icing! This ingredient brings the whole cake together, completing the masterpiece you just baked. The Angus industry is not that different from this, except we add extra sprinkles and designs. Instead of keeping the finished product the same each time, we try and advance or improve it. This is done through features like genetic testing

*Continued on page 130*

*Pen to Paper* continued from page 129

and trying to create the best new resources for Angus breeders to use. Another major element the Angus industry has to help improve the cake is their Angus juniors, also known as the National Junior Angus Association. Through this organization, they teach young future Angus breeders or advocates, like myself, the roles the Angus

industry has to offer and how they can be a part of it. Through being a member of this association, I have not only learned what makes the Angus breed so much greater than any other breed, especially when eating a nice juicy steak, but also how I can have an impact on the industry.

Whether you have one Angus cow, a thousand Angus cows, or no

Angus cows, each and every person is essential to the Angus industry and can have a positive impact on it. For me, this is through raising Angus cattle, advocating for the Angus industry and talking with consumers like yourself why the Angus industry is not just a hobby, but is a lifestyle that I choose to live and promote everyday!

## *Response to Meatless Mondays*

*by Morgan Blommel, senior winner*

If one of my friends came to me and told me that they are thinking of doing Meatless Mondays or potentially going vegan, I would give them the following essay about cutting meat out of their diet.

Over the last 10 to 15 years, the American society has changed drastically. Social media has come to play a huge part in our everyday lives. With the development of social media, you can see the influence it plays in our lives from makeup and clothes to what people are eating in their diets. With the rise of social media, there has also been a rise in veganism and people pushing for meatless diets. Many people see celebrities and influencers posting about meatless diets and think they should give it a try too. What they do not realize is that going truly meatless means potentially compromising their health.

Some people have come to believe that eating a solely plant-based diet can help solve most of the world's problems. Although some meat products have been linked to some health issues, it mainly pertains to processed meat products. People

who consume a meatless diet can be found deficient of many necessary vitamins and minerals essential to our health. Proteins that are found in meat also more closely resemble the proteins found in the human body, therefore they are more easily broken down and broken down faster.

Vitamin B12 is a water-soluble vitamin that is found in foods, added to others and can be taken in the form of a dietary supplement. It is required for the proper development of red blood cells, neurological function and the synthesis of DNA. It is most commonly found in fish, red meats, poultry and dairy. By just eating 3 ounces (oz.) of cooked rainbow trout, you are getting 90% of the daily value of vitamin B12.

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin that is found in very few foods. It is also found in ultraviolet rays from the sun and is absorbed when the ultraviolet rays from the sun touch the skin. Vitamin D helps to promote calcium absorption and maintain adequate calcium and phosphate concentrations to help enable normal mineralization of bone. Vitamin D is most commonly found in oily

fish, eggs and dairy. By eating a 3-oz. portion of sockeye salmon you are receiving 112% of the daily value of vitamin D.


Docosahexaenoic acid(DHA) is an omega-3 fatty acid found in fish. It is very important for brain health and is very hard to get from plant protein sources. It is also a fatty acid that is found in sperm and brain phospholipids, it is found very prominently in the retina. DHA is also very crucial during pregnancy and infancy. It is needed by the central nervous system to ensure that the eyes and brain develop normally. If adequate levels of DHA are not present during the early stages of life, it can be associated with learning disabilities, ADHD and several other disorders.

Heme iron is another nutrient that is found predominantly in meat products such as red meat, fish, seafood and poultry. Since heme iron comes from meat, it is more easily absorbed by the body. People who eat a diet that is based off of plant products face a greater risk of becoming iron deficient. Eating a plant based diet only provides you

with non-heme iron which is not absorbed as well as heme iron found in meat products. In order for non-heme iron to be absorbed, the digestive system must first break it down in order for it to be absorbed by the body. By doing this you are not receiving as much iron as someone eating meat.

There is also a big idea surrounding a plant based diet that it is better for the environment. What people do not see is that not all of the more popular plant products such as avocados and quinoa are not found and grown in the United States by farmers. Many of these products are grown in other countries and must be imported to the U.S. By importing these products it takes a toll on the environment by realizing carbon emissions that could potentially harm the ozone layer. The demand for products like these is also so high in the U.S. that it raises the prices for the people that live in the countries where they are grown and rely on them as staples in their diets. Some of the prices are raised so drastically to where the natives cannot afford the products to purchase for their own families. Some of the countries are even seeing shortages of said products because they are exporting so much to the states.

Many people do not realize that by converting to an all plant diet that they will have to eat more and consume more calories to get the same amount of protein that is in a serving of meat. Many of them do not realize the amount of protein that is found in such a small portion of meat. In just a 3-oz. serving of lean beef there are twenty five grams of protein and only one hundred and eighty calories. In order to get that same amount of protein from raw tofu, you would have to consume one and a quarter cups, but this amount of raw tofu contains two hundred and thirty six calories. In just three and a half cups of black beans you can receive twenty five grams of protein, but your calorie intake is also three hundred and seventy four. To get that same amount of protein from peanut butter which is liked by both vegans and non-vegans you would have to consume seven tablespoons with a calorie count of six hundred and seventy.

Although a plant based diet may seem healthier, they are not always healthier. As we have seen, you have to eat drastically greater amounts of plant products in order to receive the same amount of protein found in smaller portions or meat. The protein that is found in meat is also broken down more easily than the protein found in plant products. Consuming meat also more times than not means consuming fewer calories. 

## Creative Writing



Winning the junior division of creative writing are (from left) Paighton Witt, Leslie, Mo., third; Dane Haverkamp, Bern, Kan., second; and Alexis Koelling, Curryville, Mo., first.



Winning the intermediate division of creative writing are (from left) Mardee Sadowsky, Eagleville, Mo., third; Hannah Tremaine, Oconomowoc, Wis., second; and Marcie Harward, Richfield, N.C., first.



Winning first place in the senior division of creative writing is Morgan Blommel, Dade City, Fla.