

by Mark McCully  
CEO, American Angus Association



## I hate roller coasters

*Ask my family, going to an amusement park and riding roller coasters is not my thing. I'm perfectly content finding a shady spot to sit and watch my wife and kids as they go on one after another.*

I don't know how you feel about amusement parks, but I suspect when it comes to genetic selection tools, you prefer some stability. After all, expected progeny differences (EPDs) are used to guide mating and purchase decisions that will influence your herd for years to come. I know extreme changes can significantly affect cattle value and consequently have negative financial ramifications for our members.

Single-step evaluation, introduced in 2017, and the more recent selection index changes have improved our EPDs but created significant change on some individual animals. If you own one of those animals, or have bred to one of those bulls, you've maybe felt like you were on a roller coaster. And like me at the amusement park, going up isn't so bad, but coming down is no fun at all.

I am well aware that these changes have been controversial within our membership — even divisive at times. I talk with members who applaud the American Angus Association for staying progressive and continually using the best science available to deliver industry-leading selection tools. I talk with others who are frustrated and want assurances there will be no more changes. I talk with members who wish the Association were moving faster, and yet others

who want us to pump the brakes. I truly respect all opinions because they are rooted in those members' perspectives and their realities.


I believe the demand for registered Angus seedstock outpaces that of other breeds today because the commercial cattleman has always been front and center. Angus breeders have adopted technology to produce seedstock that fits their customers' needs. I have no doubt the industry is in a better place today because of our members' willingness to embrace change.

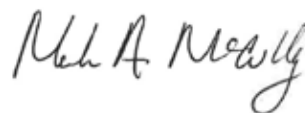
### The pace of change

Technology is advancing faster than ever, and this new pace of change can get uncomfortable. New discoveries are being made with advancing science, and things we thought we knew for certain are now up for debate. Exciting genetic advancements are being made in the area of fertility, for example, and will be of monumental importance. For our members to continue leading the beef industry with registered Angus genetics, we must not ignore this new thinking.

Admittedly, there are days I wish we could just push the pause button and let everyone catch their breath. In reality, that's not possible. Choosing to be complacent with what we have is kicking the door

wide open for our competitors and putting at risk the demand and market share our members have worked so hard to build. While there are no major changes planned for our genetic evaluation in the near future, we must always stay open to improving our EPDs for our commercial customers when the science presents itself. Our commercial producers deserve the very best we can give them.

As an association, we will be focusing on elevating our communication and education around the advancing science that affects genetic evaluation and EPD calculations. We want you to be confident and informed, and we appreciate the opportunity to have dialogue with you as questions arise. We will work to minimize extreme swings in animal values that can make a member feel like they are on a roller coaster they didn't buy a ticket for. And in the end, we will continue to make registered Angus seedstock that keep our commercial customers in business and move this great industry forward. 



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