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Angus cattle, Angus breeders and the American Angus Association came in for a good deal of praise from Dr. Bill Pope, the keynote speaker at the recent National Angus Conference in Athens, Georgia. It is indeed a compliment, coming from a man with Bill Pope's long association with the beef cattle industry, his integrity and his ability to evaluate and analyze. We should take his words seriously.

"You have the mother cow supreme, and don't ever lose sight of that," he said. "This loss of mothering ability in some beef cattle worries me most in the changes I see taking place today."

At another point, Pope emphasized "the mother cow supreme is still the Angus cow and a good many Southwest cattlemen at least are beginning to think back along that line.

"You have the ideal carcass and marbling too. Put that all together and you have the breed ideally suited for the next wave of opportunity in the beef business."

I like that, and I think he is right. The next wave of opportunity in the beef cattle business can belong to Angus, if we accept the challenge.

Bill Pope also said that in the Angus business we have the progressive breeders willing to change, an Association that exercises the leadership needed to produce change, and the cattle numbers and data base able to make changes. "So you have it all," he told the breeders in Athens. "If you miss it, it is your own fault."

Pope also pointed out that cattle producers won't be called upon in the next decade to hit a moving target of beef specifications. "Cattle and carcass specifications won't change as dramatically," he said, "and it will be easier for cow-calf producers and seedstock producers to aim for those specifications."

A report on the National Angus Conference can be found elsewhere in this issue. It includes more information on Bill Pope's keynote address, as well as the topics covered by all the rest of the speakers.

Many people thought that this year's Conference was even better than the one a year ago in Billings. Both were excellent, and I wish every member of the American Angus Association could have taken part in one or both of them. We all need to listen to and debate new ideas, even if we don't agree with all of them.

There won't be a National Conference in 1990. Instead, the Association will sponsor its next National Angus Conference in the Spring of 1991, in the Southwestern United States. I hope to see many of you there.

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