

# Angus Stakes

by Shauna Rose Hermel, editor



## It's time to be neighborly

The temperature drop and the color change of the foliage this last week tell us fall is here. That's encouraging. We've had a pretty hot, dry summer. In a farming community, that creates some sour dispositions as folks worry about yields and feed for the winter.

The cool air has even perked up our dog's attitude, and football season always perks up my husband Todd's. I think the Good Lord made fall such a beautiful season and gave us other distractions to take our minds off what can sometimes feel like a never-ending workload and a mountain of stress.

Whether we're talking crops or livestock, we hold our breath until fall reveals the fruits of our labors. The anticipation of yields, prices, breakdowns and marketing decisions can put furrows in the brows of the calmest of faces. All those months of worry watching the weather and the futures markets while the crops and the calves

are growing can exhaust a person mentally.

Then the fall workload hits, and it all comes to a head. Calves to wean. Bulls, heifers and steers to market. Open cows to decide to keep or cull. Winter calving facilities to prepare. Crops to harvest. School activities in full swing, which often means both added activities and loss of help. Fall meetings to attend. Production sales to plan and pull off. Year-end financial analyses to prepare. Local zoning meetings. Commuting city slickers who complain about mud on the highway.

We pride ourselves in controlling our tempers while the new veterinary assistant takes 15 minutes to draw a blood sample on a bull we know will never be as easy to get in that chute again or when a local feed salesman wants to visit for an hour in the midst of fall harvest.

Friends and family bear the brunt of the stress. It's idiot

logic, but we're often at our worst with the people we want to think the most of us.

A few years back Todd put things pretty well into perspective when he told me we just have to realize we aren't so much mad at each other as we are just tired and crabby. It doesn't excuse harsh words, but it does at least cushion them with a little understanding. It's a little easier to work with each other when you understand you're mad at the situation, not the people. And when you have someone working with you, it makes the problem a lot less frustrating and seem a whole lot smaller.

That applies with neighbors, too.

I don't think nonagricultural people can comprehend what it means to invest your whole livelihood into crops or livestock, not knowing if you're going to get a payback until the final product — which is influenced by so many uncontrollable factors — is delivered. How many folks would contract with their employer to take a salary at the end of the year based on what the company made, with the real possibility of a loss?

Not many nonagricultural people can comprehend, but the rest of us should. If you've been in the business for long, you know what a lean year is like. Well, this is going to be an exceptionally tough fall for some folks in agriculture.

Maybe it's the season to reinvent being neighborly. After all, we're pretty fortunate to be in the cattle business, especially the Angus business.

## Heads up to state auxiliaries, parents and advisors

Don't forget to encourage your state's junior members to apply for the American Angus Auxiliary Certificate of Achievement Award. The deadline is Nov. 1. An application can be found on the Association's Web site ([www.angus.org](http://www.angus.org)).

Awards are issued for outstanding achievement on national, state and district (tri-county) levels in the showing or in other junior activities.

Placings needed to earn an achievement award include champion or reserve champion bull, steer, heifer or cow-calf pair; or division champion or reserve division champion bull, heifer, steer or cow-calf pair.

Also recognized are scholarship finalists; princesses; queens; and Gold, Silver and Bronze award winners; as well as winnings in showmanship, judging, carcass contests, public speaking, posters, team sales, cook-off, photography, scrapbook, extemporaneous speaking, quiz bowl and all competitions recognized by the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA).

Submit information to Renee Driscoll, 2558 N Ave., Williamsburg, IA 52361.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shauna".

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## Fitting words

These words, spoken by John F. Kennedy before the Massachusetts State Legislature, seem appropriate as we head to Louisville for the Annual Meeting and election:

"For of those to whom much is given, much is required. And when at some future date the high court of history sits in judgment on each of us, recording whether in our brief span of service we fulfilled our responsibilities to the state, our success or failure, in whatever office we hold, will be measured by the answers to four questions:

**"First, were we truly men of courage? ...**

**"Second, were we truly men of judgment? ...**

**"Third, were we truly men of integrity? ...**

**"Finally, were we truly men of dedication?"**