

by Mark McCully  
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## The other AI

*In November of 2022, OpenAI launched ChatGPT, a free artificial intelligence chatbot, and it seems the headlines and discussions around AI have been on full-steam ever since.*

Essentially, you can ask the website to do anything from “write an *Angus Journal* column” to “suggest four points I should include in my bull sale letter.” No, I didn’t use it to write this column. By no means am I an expert, but for the past year I have tried to read and learn more about artificial intelligence (AI) and think about how the technology could affect the Angus business in the future.

Fair warning, ChatGPT, and the entire topic of AI is a bit of a rabbit hole. The topic is big, ever-changing and very much in its infancy, so predicting its future is hard and very speculative. Also, the topic can be controversial and maybe even scary, depending on how many sci-fi movies you’ve watched where robots take over mankind. But in the end, I think it’s best to understand new technology vs. ignore it.

First, what is AI? It is the science of using machines to recognize patterns, make decisions, have discernment and basically, think like a human (there’s the scary part).

The applications are endless and the possibilities to improve healthcare, defense, manufacturing and so many other industries have been widely touted.

While we may not recognize it, most of us use or benefit from AI today. Alexa and Siri are AI virtual assistants. The fraud

detection alerts we get from our credit card company are generated by AI. Facial recognition at the airport and e-commerce shopping recommendations, all powered by AI. Design, photos and artwork are being created with AI. Human medicine is being changed significantly through improved diagnosis and treatment, personalized medicine and improved drug discovery.

But what about the Angus business? We are all familiar with the use of artificial insemination — the original “AI” — but does this “other AI” really spill over into cattle production? I believe the answer is, “absolutely.” Maybe it won’t be tomorrow, but I do feel the applications will be significant in the next five to 10 years.


Where might we see AI applications? I asked ChatGPT and these are the areas it outlined: health monitoring, nutrition management, reproduction management, livestock monitoring, genetic selection, predictive analysis, supply chain optimization, sustainability, labor efficiency and market analysis. To this list I would add weather forecasting, animal identification and facial recognition, production data capture, risk management, consumer behavior, and product marketing. Essentially, AI has the potential to influence nearly every facet of beef cattle production in some way.

In the area of animal breeding, my mind tends to go quickly to the data we could collect.

Feedlots could capture data on health, intake and gain. There could be a way to more objectively measure traits like structure and mobility. Could we have an app to assess a cow at calving for body condition, weight, udder quality, and feet and leg soundness? What about improved feedback data for carcass traits like red meat yield and tenderness?

When mountains of this data are accumulated, can AI offer solutions for analysis? I don’t believe any of these scenarios are improbable. In fact, I think they are likely.

To some, AI and machine learning may all sound a bit too futuristic. To others, it may sound like a great opportunity and a solution to many problems. While it’s not the American Angus Association’s job to say which of these technologies a breeder should implement, I do feel it’s our responsibility to research and understand them and help our members stay on the leading edge with problem-solving and workable solutions for the future.

So does the day come when you can say, “Hey Siri, go feed the cows.” I guess we will see. 

  
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