

from the office

LEAD IN

By Richard Spader, Executive Vice President, American Angus Association



The best news in the Angus business in the 1985 fiscal year came from the Certified Angus Beef program. Sales of Certified Angus Beef during the twelve months were 15.9 million pounds, an increase of 7.6 million pounds (96 percent) over 1984. Looking at these figures it is hard to believe that in fiscal 1983 total CAB sales amounted to just 1.6 million pounds.

During the past year alone, 48 new retail outlets signed contracts to sell CAB and 127 new restaurants and country clubs began providing CAB to their discriminating customers. The 15.9 million pounds of CAB sold the past year is equal to 450 semitrailer truckloads of boxed beef.

The logical question that Angus breeders ask is, "How many dollars does this put in my pocket?" Right now there is no exact answer to this question. We know of individual instances when top-quality Angus cattle have sold for the CAB program at market-topping and even premium prices. We also know that special Angus feeder cattle sales in Kansas have attracted buyers from feedlots that supply CAB packers. And more of these sales are planned in other states.

Last year some 734,500 steers and heifers were visually identified at the packing plants as being eligible for the CAB program and 154,600 cattle were actually certified. That is a lot of Angus cattle and at the rate that the program is growing, it can't help but exert a very positive influence on the Angus business.

There is other good news in 1985 as well. Despite a decline in overall registrations, the total number of

AHIR birth, weaning and yearling weights was 230,004, down only .7 percent from a year ago. It shows that despite unfavorable economic conditions in the cattle industry last year, Angus breeders continue to use the AHIR program to measure the performance of their cattle and improve their breeding programs. In fact, the 102,206 weaning weights processed this year are equal to 65 percent of all Angus cattle registered during the 1985 fiscal year, an all-time record. We are fast approaching the time when nearly all Angus cattle registered will be backed by AHIR records.

Nearly as encouraging is that breeders on the AHIR program recorded and reported to the Association nearly 85,000 birth weights, another all-time record. For many commercial cattle producers today, this is the single most important bit of performance information they can get. It is encouraging to note that reported Angus birth weights last year were more than the total registrations of most beef breed associations.

At the time this is being written (early October) fed beef cattle prices are getting close to the \$60 per cwt figure. That is still not good enough, but it sure beats the \$50 or so prices of a few weeks ago, and the trend is in the right direction. With the continued culling of beef cow herds, the feeding of more heifers, the prospects of improved beef promotion, information and research funds, and a growing Certified Angus Beef program, it appears that the coming fiscal year could be an improvement over 1985 for nearly all of us in the Angus business.

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