

by Julie Mais
Editor



A need for innovation

A childhood spent on a family farm is healthy mix of charm and work. As my siblings and I got older and when not in school, we would often be in charge of chores and tending to the show cattle.

With a mom who worked in town and dad who was also a carpenter, the independence given to my siblings and I was both earned and necessary.

Since we were not as tall, strong or wise as our parents, sometimes the simple tasks needed a little youthful creativity to get it done — from carrying heavy feed buckets to fixing a downed fence.

We never seemed to have a pocketknife, or at least a sharp one, nearby to cut strings on the square hay bales. Innovation comes natural to my younger brother, and that reminder hangs in the barn to this day just under the loft, in the form of a tomahawk of sorts — his creation — which became our tool of choice to break those strings.

During the recent Angus Convention, we heard from “Innovation” keynote speaker Jeff DeGraff who is an advisor to Fortune 500 companies and a professor at

the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan.

He challenged Angus breeders to pursue innovation and to not become complacent. DeGraff shared this perspective — the seed of our undoing is sown at the pinnacle of our success.

“Most organizations go under, not because of competition, but because they cannot change dominant logic,” he said.


He suggested we typically change when life gets hard or dull, but my takeaway from his message was to welcome new perspective.

DeGraff shared a quote from philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer. “Every man takes the limits of his own field of vision for the limits of the world.” Meaning, when we only surround ourselves with people like ourselves, blind spots are created and all you are left with are people who believe what you believe.

The Angus breed and cattle

industry are certainly faced with many current challenges and ones that are just starting to come into focus on the horizon. Yet when we come together, share perspectives and support each other, barriers are broken and solutions are found.

We will share more from DeGraff’s keynote and a full recap of the Angus Convention and business conducted during the Annual Convention of Delegates in the January *Angus Journal*. In the meantime, subscribe to the *AJ Daily* e-newsletter for daily news from the Angus breed at www.anguselist.com or visit www.angusjournal.net.

As another year ends, on behalf of the *Angus Journal* family to yours, Merry Christmas and happy holidays! 



jmais@angus.org

The Sustainability Edition

We know that “sustainability” gets thrown at you quite a lot. People are demanding more, calculating more and talking more. Ranchers are sometimes the cause, sometimes the key — depending on who you talk to. Meanwhile, you’re just doing the good job you’ve always done.

We want to cut through the noise to find clarity around what we know, why it matters and what it all means to you.



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Watch for the “The Sustainability Edition,” a supplement to the *Angus Journal* and *Angus Beef Bulletin*® in January 2022.