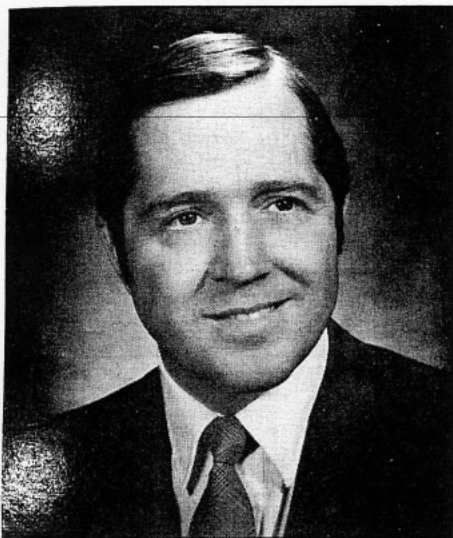


from the office

LEAD IN

By Richard Spader
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For nearly as long as I have attended agricultural meetings, some speaker was always predicting a bright future for agriculture based on the fact that the world's population was expanding and that there would be millions more hungry people to feed down the road.

The implication was that success would come in time. All we in agriculture needed to do was wait and we would eventually become a highly rewarded, increasingly important segment of society.

We don't hear this much any more, for several reasons. First of all, hungry people are hungry because they don't have the money to buy food. Increasing the number of people who lack the money to purchase food can't help the farm economy much.

It's true that we went through a period where grain and soybean prices made amazing upward advances. That happened when the bulk of our CCC stored grain was used up or sold to Russia, and all at once countries that needed grain had to go out on the open market and buy it rather than tap Uncle Sam's stockpile at subsidized prices. But as the Arab oil states found out several years later, higher prices do two things. First, they limit consumption, and second, they stimulate production, which brings prices down.

There was a short period at the beginning of the 1970s when some experts predicted cattle prices would remain at profitable levels for a long time, if not forever. But that didn't last long either, thanks to a combination of factors that included over production, declining demand, and a worsening world economy.

Today, it appears that agriculture, particularly the livestock industry, is taking a more realistic approach to solving its problems. To paraphrase Pogo, "We have discovered the people who can help us, and they are us."

This is the final month in the American Angus Assn.'s Centennial year. As we enter our second century I think it is obvious to most of us that if the industry is to grow and prosper for another 25, 50 or 100 years, we must become more efficient producers of top quality beef, we must become better managers, and especially we must become better marketers.

Only within the last few years have beef producers, particularly Angus producers, come to realize that no one else is going to promote our product for us. If we want to carve out a bigger market for ourselves then we are going to have to develop the programs, and back them with enough dollars to do the job. This is true of beef promotion as a whole in relation to other meats. This is true of Angus beef, particularly Certified Angus Beef, in relation to the beef industry, and it is true of you and your own herd, in relation to the other breeds and other breeders in your particular market area.

Angus has more potential for growth and development than any other breed in the world. The challenges we face will not always be easy to meet. But they are exciting and potentially very rewarding, and I look forward with great anticipation to being involved in the Second Century of American Angus Assn. history.

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