

Lead In

by Richard Spader, executive vice president



Expectations run high for the next generation of Angus genetics

Fall Angus activities have been in full swing for a few months now. From state fairs to national shows to sales, there is an Angus event every day from now till the new year.

On some days there are as many as six or seven Angus sales in different parts of the United States. This comes home to us working at the Association and the *Angus Journal* when we encounter conflicts and try to have personnel attend the sales, shows and activities.

In checking our listing of sales through Sept. 30 (the end of the fiscal year [FY]), there were 619 Angus sales attended by regional managers during the 12-month period. There'll be that many or more in FY 2000.

That's a lot of Angus business in a year. It's also an indication of what's happening in the Angus breed. Business is good, and demand for Angus cattle never has been

better. Through fall production sales, breeders are marketing the cream of the 1999 calf crop. Expectations run high for the next generation of Angus genetics.

What impresses me most is the fact that most cattlemen don't have to travel far to buy good Angus seedstock. I've always contended that you need to check some of the good Angus herds in your local area because there will be outstanding seedstock to purchase. That doesn't mean you shouldn't look beyond your state or region; it's just that we often overlook good genetics close to home or even in your own herd.

The level of Angus business nationwide is a true barometer of the breed. Like many large companies with sales offices and dealers throughout the country, the American Angus Association and its 34,000 adult and junior members are much the same.

You as breeders are the marketers on a local and state level, serving new registered Angus breeders, established breeders and commercial bull customers. It's our job as an Association to maintain strong and viable programs, and yours to implement those programs to improve your cattle and to market your Angus in your trade area.

In the years ahead we'll likely see even better times in our business. As the national cow herd bottoms out and prices improve as they are right now, we can anticipate a buildup in cow numbers. That slow process begins with the retention of more replacement heifers, and the need for more Angus bulls will follow.

Commercial cattlemen know they can look to the Angus breed and to you as breeders for highly predictable Angus seedstock — and they know there are reputable registered Angus breeders in every part of the country. That's a tremendous asset to our business.

The industry is also aware of the contribution of Angus cattle, and I don't see that changing anytime soon. We're in an enviable position in the beef industry.

That doesn't mean we can coast for the next few years. Any of you breeding and selling cattle know how challenging it is to stay competitive. But it is this competition that has driven the Angus breed to its present position in the industry.

Breeders' use of the tools for performance, selection and marketing has made the Angus breed the most dependable, most predictable and most used breed in the industry. Because of this, the Angus breed is in demand and successful Angus operations of all sizes can be found in every state, county and locale in the nation.

It's an exciting time in our business. We look forward to making it even more exciting in the years ahead.

Computer cow-calf game

It's time to put your breeding knowledge to the test in the 2000 computer cow-calf game. Players are given an imaginary herd of cows, complete with performance records and expected progeny differences (EPDs), which are bred to imaginary bulls. Within weeks, results of the matings are returned and another breeding season begins. Five calf crops count toward the final score.

To get your computer herd, contact the Junior Activities Department by Jan. 5. The game is free to junior members and is \$15 for adults. The 10 top-scoring juniors will be recognized at the 2000 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Des Moines, Iowa.

Angus summer internships

College students gain valuable experience through summer internship programs. The American Angus Association and the *Angus Journal* offer three internships each summer. The internships are paid and will run from June 1, 2000, through Aug. 15, 2000. The application deadline for all three positions is Feb. 15, 2000.

The Junior Activities Department employs an intern to help with the planning and organization of summer junior activities, including the NJAS. Candidates must be working toward a degree in agriculture, and preference is given to applicants who are involved with junior Angus activities or the Angus breed. Send a letter of application and resumé to James Fisher, director of junior activities.

The Communications and Public Relations Department will be looking for a junior or senior working toward an agricultural journalism/communications degree. Primary responsibilities are to write news releases and photo cutlines about Angus people, shows and events, plus other special projects. Strong writing and editing skills and an interest in pursuing a career in livestock communications are a must. Send a letter, resumé and writing samples to Susan Waters, director of public relations.

The *Angus Journal* will offer an editorial internship to a college junior or senior pursuing a degree in agricultural journalism/communications. Writing and photography experience is a plus. The student will write feature stories, edit various monthly columns and be involved in every aspect of magazine editorial production. Forward a letter, resumé and writing samples to Shauna Hermel, *Angus Journal* editor.