



Up Front

► by **John Crouch**, executive vice president

Why do cowboys love Denver?

Despite the finding of a cow infected with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in the United States, the New Year arrived at the American Angus Association in fine fashion — full of hope and promise. The month of December was one of the best months on record in recent years relative to registrations and transfers. Registered Angus sales scheduled during autumn 2003 set a torrid pace, and commercial Angus females commanded the highest prices in history. Congratulations. We couldn't have done it without you.

NWSS kick-off

One of the first events to christen each New Year is the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver, Colo. The 2004 edition of this spectacular event was a resounding success, attended by Angus breeders from virtually every state in the Union, as well as Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, Mexico, Canada, Argentina, Brazil and many other countries. The NWSS is the event these foreign customers schedule their trips to include. It's one of the biggest drawing cards of our domestic livestock industry.

The NWSS is an interesting enigma. Denver, nestled in a high mountain valley, is one of the meccas of the free world relative to cowboys, Western life, Western culture,

cattle and horses. A trip to the NWSS is accompanied by a nostalgia that has not been duplicated by any other event in the world.

There are many things that make Denver and the NWSS special. Here's a few of them that come to my mind.

Denver is a magical place, surrounded by the mystique and tradition that are associated with being "on the hill" and "in the yards" in the "Mile High City."

The NWSS has encouraged the retail sector in Denver to adopt Western themes. Western wear is the rule rather than the exception, and there is even an NWSS greeter at the airport. Denver "cowboys out" in January.

The show happens during one of the

coldest months of the year. The snow-capped mountains to the west bespeak good times and the great outdoors and provide a backdrop you can find in no other place in the world.

Denver is a gathering place, a watering hole where long-time friends and acquaintances meet on an annual basis. Problems are identified, solutions are discussed and tales are told.

Denver is an atmosphere of commerce. Cattle, horses and other livestock are bought and sold to all parts of the world.

The stock show provides a forum for Angus breeders and Association directors and staff to interact and critique new programs and to discuss ways of refining existing ones. If you attended, I hope you had a chance to stop by the "Angus Listening Post" in the yards.

Denver provides a logical meeting place for many livestock-based organizations and is home to several breed associations and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA).

The stock show provides a medium for urban dwellers and youngsters of all ages to interact with people of the land. It promotes the values of agriculture to those who

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REGIONAL MANAGERS—Refer to page 294.

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For a CAB staff listing, refer to page 88.

otherwise have little knowledge of livestock production.

The NWSS atmosphere is all about competition — within and between breeds. The winners are exuberant, and those who stood second come back with a vengeance next year. Granted, it may not be for everyone, but there is nothing as compelling as good competition.

Showing strength

These are just a few of the reasons why Angus breeders love to attend the NWSS. The number of Angus entries both on the hill and in the yards, and in other related events, requires the Angus schedule to span a five-day period, during which the excitement and involvement of participants is intense. So, it is important to shower kudos and say “hats off” to those exhibitors and herdsman who make the NWSS and other shows possible. While many of us invest less than a week at the event, these men and women spend countless dollars and devote endless hours to the preparation of Angus cattle, not only at home, but at the show as well. They represent an aspect of the business sometimes criticized by other segments of beef production, but one that has always been important in the promotion of the Angus breed and the creation of a competitive marketplace for Angus genetics.

It is my opinion that the success of the Angus breed lies within the strength and depth of its genetic pool and the diversity of its breeders. Each facet of our business — whether it be competition on the tanbark, the production of bulls for the commercial industry, production of junior projects and everything in between — is important in its own right.

We are and should always be grateful for this diversity. It's what makes the American Angus Association the largest, most successful beef breed association in the world.



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