

Youth Ambassador

The Missouri Angus Auxiliary offers a position of leadership to the state's young men.

Story & photos by Cara Bieroth

Pierce City, Mo., junior member Cody Washam is getting a unique experience this year in a new role created by the Missouri Angus Auxiliary. Called the Angus Ambassador, the title and the responsibilities that come with it are presented to a male member of the Missouri Junior Angus Association. Though it carries a completely different set of duties, the position was created to offer young men a role equivalent to the role the Missouri Angus Queen provides to young ladies.

The idea of the Angus Ambassador was developed two years ago when Missouri Angus Auxiliary members began thinking of ways to most effectively distribute funds. "Our auxiliary is designed to focus around youth projects," says former Auxiliary President Sandy Trosper. "We try to use the money we raise to enrich these projects."

After some discussion, it was mentioned that while the auxiliary sponsors both boys' and girls' scholarships, the remaining funds go toward queens and princesses. No funding went to male programs to balance available opportunities.

"We wanted to be a little more fair and offer something for the boys," Trosper says.

A task force was formed to develop a draft of the program.

"The auxiliary thought it was a wonderful idea, and we had the money to support it," Trosper adds. "So we set it up to where the interviews and the applications would be due the same time as the queens."

In June 2003, after submitting his application and interviewing before a panel of judges, Washam was selected as the second Missouri Angus Ambassador.

"I figured this would be a good experience for me," Washam says. "Queens and princesses have their deal, but men have never really had a chance to have a role to promote the breed for their state."

Job requirements

Ambassadors have a totally different role than the Missouri Angus Queen, Trosper



says. "They have a role that maybe follows a fieldman."

The application states that the ambassador must assist the American Angus Association regional manager and the Missouri Angus fieldman at shows and at sales. The ambassador is expected to help check cattle in at shows, post show orders, assist ringside, man information booths and fulfill other public relations opportunities. Ambassadors are required to attend the Missouri Angus Futurity, Missouri Angus Preview, the Missouri State Fair and the Missouri Cattlemen's Convention.

"You have to get out there, and you have to learn about the Angus breed," Washam says. "You have to learn new things all the time."

Washam works closely with Association Regional Manager Don Laughlin, becoming a protégé through his one-year term as an ambassador.

"I try to make it a learning experience for



► Missouri Angus Ambassador Cody Washam encourages other states to follow Missouri's lead in developing an ambassador program. "It is a huge honor to promote the Angus breed," he says.

them so they can learn some of the things we do at shows and in my job in general," Laughlin says. "I try to get them involved and let them help."

That assistance comes in handy at times, Laughlin admits, and it gives the ambassadors an opportunity to learn a little bit about what regional managers do.

"Cody has been excellent," Laughlin says. "He has worked the ring, and he has helped line up cattle and pass out numbers and

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such. He is a big help from that standpoint, and hopefully it is a learning experience for him. So it is a two-way street.”

Washam has served the Missouri Junior Angus Association as its president and vice president. He is also a member of the Missouri Junior Cattlemen’s Association. He has taken on the major responsibility of acting as a junior co-chair for the 2004 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Kansas City, Mo.

However, he says earning the ambassador role is one of his proudest accomplishments. When the ambassadorship was first announced, Washam knew it was something to shoot for. “It was one of my goals,” Washam says. “And when I have a goal, I am willing to do it.”

Washam says he hopes the experience will improve his leadership abilities and increase his self-confidence. “It gives me the education and the experience of being more of a leader for the state,” he says. “I think it is important to be a good leader, and in order to be a good leader, you have to have confidence in yourself and in other people. I think that this gives you the opportunity to improve in both of those areas.”

Moving forward

Like many new programs taking shape, there is always room to improve as the program begins to take the shape of the solid program its founders envisioned. But, Trospen says, the program is accomplishing its purpose of providing enriching experiences that help junior members to grow in their abilities.

“There is always something we could tweak and work on,” Trospen says, “but the whole purpose of our program is that the more applications that a young person has to fill out, the more interviews that they do, the little speeches that they have to give, just helps them to grow into the adult world. We want them to grow in this position.”

Laughlin says, “It is an evolutionary process, and it will take time, but I think the objectives will become clearer and clearer with time. Every ambassador is going to have a different personality and is going to fit in in a different place, just like every queen does.”

Washam said he appreciates the Missouri Angus Auxiliary for making this unique ambassador program possible, and he encourages other states to follow in Missouri’s lead. “It is a huge honor to promote the Angus breed.”

