



Up Front

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

Angus strength found in quality

As we approach the heat of summer, what are we thinking about as people of the land, and, more specifically, as Angus breeders? I suppose since it is foremost in our minds we reflect back on the drought that has relentlessly plagued the majority of our country during the past few years. We also consider the fact that tough economic conditions have made free agricultural enterprise a bit less desirable from a profit standpoint. On the positive side, the advent of rain makes us also realize just how dramatically the attitudes of stockmen and farmers can change with a few days' moisture.

Strength to be found

We also consider and appreciate the fact that the Angus breed has enjoyed several years of unprecedented growth. However, as a result of the conditions specified above, cow numbers have dramatically decreased; hence the demand for seedstock is not as great as it has been in the recent past.

After we have considered all those issues that affect us on a daily basis, it appears logical not to expect increases in sales and other activities when those with whom we do business are experiencing cutbacks.

In the Association's home city of Saint Joseph, Mo., a few years back citizens were presented with the challenge of having a pork processing plant settle here. The guardians of human sanctity in our fair city said no to that scenario in a resounding

fashion. However, the opportunity for another plant of the same venue recently surfaced, and, mind you, with the unemployment rate at more than 6%, all of a sudden sentiment changed. It now appears we have a good chance of attracting another such company, one that will offer employment to 200 people. Difficult times dictate that the citizenry return to the basics. Good jobs help make a great economy.

Back to basics

The beef industry is no exception. When times get tough, commercial producers also return to the basics. All the fads and bells and whistles producers paid attention to during the boom times fade into oblivion. At the end of the day that grizzled, weather-beaten, reality-tempered cowboy says to himself ...

"These cows gotta have a live calf, and they've got to do it on their own. With prices like we got last year, I can't afford to be up with 'em all night. They gotta raise that calf. That's their job, and I'm not gonna help 'em do it. I know if those calves are Angus, they're gonna bring top dollar at the market. Besides, I realized long ago that I'm not gonna get rich at this job, so I want the most I can get on payday with the least amount of work I have to do to get it."

Just so you know, the author of these comments is a commercial cattleman and a hill-country farmer by trade who, early on, was responsible for making farm payments from the sale of commercial cattle. Somehow that does make a difference in philosophy.

The Angus breed has stood the test of time and will continue to prevail by concentrating on the basics of production. Having said that, Angus breeders must realize that breed improvement might not be realized by selling every bull produced at a premium price. It means selling the good ones — the genetic advancers. Quality is still "Job 1."


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For a CAB staff listing, refer to page 81.