



Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

Helping hands

As I sit down to write this column, summer activities have us on a fast pace. The hay has been baled, and many associations have had their state preview shows. County fairs are in full swing, and families from all over the country are headed to Louisville, Ky., for the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS), which will feature about 1,000 head of Angus cattle and 700 youth. State tours, state fairs and fall sales are just around the corner.

It takes a multitude of people to plan and coordinate all these activities. I guarantee you, few events will come off without a hitch, but all are available and function as well as they do because someone took the time and effort to plan the event, to set things up and to clean up afterward. To all the workhorses of Angus activities, thank you for a great effort!

Short on time

Sometimes it seems almost more than we can do just to get ourselves pulled away from the chores at home to go to the county fair or to a state field day, let alone to spend a week at the NJAS or the state fair. But nine times out of 10, once we get there we're glad we went.

The opportunities these events offer to develop and renew friendships are invaluable to youth and adults alike. How many times do you get to visit with friends you haven't seen in weeks ... months ... even years?

So many ideas are shared — practical on-farm production tips, new philosophies on genetics, how to keep a steak juicy, how to raise your kids, or how to talk your mom and dad into going to the next fair.

And those are just the side benefits to the

main event. Maybe it's a competition, with all the lessons in winning and losing and objectively evaluating strengths and weaknesses. Maybe it's a field day with advice on marketing cattle. Maybe it's a sale with cattle to evaluate and purchase.

As participants, our time invested to attend the event is minimal compared to the time invested by those who volunteered to host and to help conduct it. For every hour we enjoy, they've spent days setting up the program, getting judges, organizing food and maybe hotels, getting cattle prepped for display, compromising with committee members and renting Port-A-Potties.

It's human nature to complain

Often, it's the negatives — not the positives — that get carried back to the

planning committee and to the workhorses.

"It sure would have been nicer if ..."

"It was too hot." "It was too cold."

"I would have done it this way."

"The food was cold; the pop was warm."

"The flies/chiggers/gnats were nasty."

"The bleachers were in the sun."

"It was too dark in the barn to see."

"There wasn't enough time to ..."

"Things got started too late (or too early)."

"So-and-so got a better stall than I did."

We can always find something to complain about. Maybe it's human nature. Maybe we're just all cynical. Maybe it's rooted in humbleness, and we're unconsciously trying not to brag about our condition. Maybe we're just downright thoughtless.

Show your appreciation

It's a pleasurable task to do something you know people will appreciate. But when there's no appreciation for the time and effort that went into the planning, setup and teardown of an event, it can start to feel more like a burden.

Make sure those who worked to make possible the events you attend(ed) this summer and fall know their efforts were appreciated. Don't let theirs be a thankless task.

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