



Up Front

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

A world of responsibility

In early July, American Angus Association President Steve Brooks and I were privileged to attend the World Angus Secretariat Technical Meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Angus worldwide

To quote from the organization's Code of Practice:

"With the international transfer of Angus genetics increasing worldwide, Angus societies/associations are becoming more dependent on their fellow World Angus Secretariat members for accurate registration information, as they are the recognized authority on the purity of the Angus genetics in the exporting country. Such reliance suggests that societies/associations need agreed protocols for the maintenance of pedigree records and the exchange of Angus genetics worldwide.

"The World Angus Secretariat was established in 1969 to facilitate the sharing of information between the various Angus societies/associations of the world. That meeting clearly agreed that the World Angus Secretariat could only recommend actions to their respective Angus society/association governing bodies. Since its establishment the World Angus Secretariat has discussed a wide range of subjects and has agreed on a

considerable number of recommendations for its constituent members. This World Angus Secretariat Code of Practice confirms the agreements reached on organizational focus, meeting arrangements for the sharing of information, protocols for the maintenance of genetic purity and exchange of genetic information, the international promotion of the Angus breed and international youth exchange programs.

"Although there have been many areas of discussion, only the resolutions which have gained general agreement have been included in this Code of Practice ..."

Information sharing

The purpose of the Secretariat is to assist and encourage the sharing of information internationally, between Angus societies and associations. The meeting I recently attended was organized by Soren Riis Vester, president of the Dansk Aberdeen-Angus Forening (Danish Angus Association). It was masterfully chaired by Peder Klausen, an eminent Angus breeder,

enthusiast and retired executive from DuPont Inc.

While many items for the agenda were provided by participating countries, those commanding the most attention were discussions of DNA technology and its application to the purebred industry, genetic prediction for embryo transplants and clones, and unique systems for international animal identification (ID) — brought to light due to extensive "passport systems" applied in tracking animals in the United Kingdom (UK) and Europe. All of those in attendance acknowledged the need for national, international and intercontinental animal ID and realized it would be only a matter of time before this action is governmentally mandated.

Another item of considerable discussion involved implementing systems to identify, monitor and disclose genetic defects. An international committee was appointed to recommend protocol for establishing such systems in countries that currently have none.

We all attend meetings, sometimes reluctantly. The thought of flying halfway around the world to attend another meeting somehow was not appealing to me as I packed my bags to go. However, the Angus business, like most other businesses, is primarily a people business. It involves relationships that transcend oceans and time zones.

In retrospect, what a privilege it was to be in the company of distinguished international Angus representatives and to share dialogue with respect to mutual concerns and triumphs. Without exception, each participating organization boasted of

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For a complete listing of officers, refer to page 40.

REGIONAL MANAGERS—Refer to 278.

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For a CAB staff listing, refer to page 245.

the emergence of the Angus breed as a dominating force in each country. Angus isn't only experiencing success here in the United States — our genetics are leading the way for beef producers around the world.

U.S. leadership

After the long plane ride home, I reflected on the role the American Angus Association plays in the World Angus Secretariat and in our worldwide Angus

industry. Breeders of Angus cattle from around the globe, and the associations and societies they belong to, look to the United States' Angus industry — both black and red — for leadership and guidance in every facet of this business. Angus entities in America serve as the reservoir of genetics and other resources for the Secretariat and provide direction within their home countries. In short, we are the proving grounds.

Realizing that, the American Angus Association's Board of Directors, members and staff have an awesome responsibility to develop and guide the future of this breed, not only within our borders or in North America, but around the world. With that responsibility comes the need for sound, science-based decisions, a progressive and forward-thinking attitude, and, maybe most importantly, a good bit of courage. The decisions we make in our Association and the programs and services we offer to our members and their commercial customers have global impact.

Without question, the world watches our genetic and breed improvement programs like a hawk. For years, the American Angus Association has set the standard in the improvement of Angus genetics and in collecting and processing performance data in the beef industry. We've set the bar high for ourselves and other breeds, as well. But this summer we've decided to raise the bar again and take our approach to genetic programs one step further.

Welcome, Sally

We were pleased to welcome Sally Dolezal as the newest member of our staff. She started in July. Sally will work as the director of genetic research in our Performance Programs Department. Because she's spent time in both academia and industry, Sally brings us a practical background in beef production and a tremendous amount of knowledge and experience in the technical and science-based side of beef cattle genetics. We're excited about having a full-time beef cattle geneticist on staff and the opportunities that lie ahead of us in the world of genetics.

As you walk your pastures, read the American Angus Association *Sire Evaluation Report* or sit at your computer entering performance data to send to the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) Department, I encourage you to think about the role you play as an improver of the breed, not only for you and your peers here in the United States, but for your fellow Angus breeders around the world. It's an awesome responsibility, and I invite you to join us in that endeavor.

The next meeting of the World Angus Secretariat will be in Sun City, Republic of South Africa, in March 2005.



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