



Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

New year brings opportunity

When I came on board nearly a decade ago, the 406,310 registrations recorded in 1968 seemed like an untouchable number — a record never to be broken. The Association recorded 239,476 animals in 1997, and 142,956 Angus were transferred to new owners.

Within reach

This past year, 347,572 animals were registered; 206,121 were transferred. That's a 45% increase in the number of Angus cattle registered and a 44% increase in the number of Angus cattle transferred in nine years. With the same increases, we could register more than 500,000 head in 2015, and we could transfer nearly 300,000.

That record of 406,310 registrations certainly seems within reach.

It hasn't been an accident. The Board and staff, with member input, have developed programs and services that have justified the growth of the breed. We document those services on a monthly basis in the *Angus Journal* and the *Angus Beef Bulletin*. And we document the improvement in the genetic base of the breed with each *Sire Evaluation Report*.

The prosperity of the Angus business has certainly positioned us to enjoy the good times.

The other reality

But as the Association leadership

repeatedly said in Louisville, Ky., during Angus activities at the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE), we can't stop now.

From the record registrations of 1968, it took only 18 years to reach a low point in 1986. Members registered only 133,475 animals that year — a 67% decrease from 1968. At that pace, we would register fewer than 115,000 head by 2024.

I think it is realistic to believe we will surpass the record high, and I think we'll do it within three years. But where we go after that is a little bit of a mystery.

I believe your growth and your future success rest in your ability to understand that what you are protecting is your right to compete as genetic suppliers to a commercial industry that is challenged, No. 1, with keeping fair market access for its product and, No. 2, with economically producing a quality product in an increasingly more regulated and more expensive system. Your commercial customers' success is dependent on their ability to make the feedlots, the packers, the retailers and the restaurateurs

successful using them as suppliers of choice while not going broke themselves in the process.

We have the system in place through Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIRSM), AngusSource[®], the Feedlot-Licensing Program (FLP) and *Certified Angus Beef*[®] (CAB[®]) to set the target for excellence, monitor success and provide the means for a consistent, predictable, dependable, quality product.

Your future will be determined by industry issues. I hope you'll take full advantage of the industry meetings conducted this winter to stay informed on the issues that will affect your business — property rights, environmental issues, animal welfare, the ramifications of the biodiesel and ethanol industries, urban encroachment, land values, labor, estate taxes, market access at home and abroad ... The list is infinite.

And as you listen to the presenters and to the accompanying "hall talk," consider what will keep your customers' customers' customers choosing them as a product supplier. It could help keep you in business for the long haul.

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