

with documented ancestral and performance information has also been very strong.

Eating at home

Even with the advent of increased fuel and energy costs, as well as increased food prices to the consumer, retail sales of fresh meat are showing a substantial increase compared to 2007. These observations strongly point to the fact that consumers are likely to decrease the number of meals consumed outside the home in restaurants in lieu of preparing and consuming more meals at home. This, coupled with an increase in exports of fresh meat products, offers sound reasons as to why the retail sector has remained strong.

This trend will also be strengthened, especially regarding the demand for high-quality beef, as we move through the summer grilling months into the autumn season.

Upbeat events

Further to this optimistic reasoning, there are several exciting local, regional and national activities and events planned for this summer. While it has not yet occurred at the time of this writing, I have no doubt that the first-ever Beef Leaders Institute (BLI) will be a highly successful event and will lay the

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Reason for optimism

As I pen this column, it seems as though good news has become somewhat elusive amidst the negativism of the major news networks and in the agricultural media. Through all of this fog and haze, it is easy for us to become focused on the unpleasant things that are so prevalent in the news and overlook the goodness that surrounds us.

Some good news

It is refreshing to see that a hint of optimism has surfaced as talking heads and economists on a national scale are starting to predict a reversal in national financial trends in the near future.

Further to the situation, producers in many parts of the Northeast and Southeast have reported rainfall in sufficient amounts to replenish that lost during the past two years of sparse moisture. Most predict that producers who had to deplete their herds due to a lack of feed and forage are

beginning to feel good about replenishing their herds, should moisture trends continue.

As we drew near the end of the spring sale season, we found that bull sales reported to the Association were much stronger throughout the country than experts predicted earlier in the year. Female sales have also been good, with excellent demand in the overall marketplace for seedstock with balanced genetic traits for calving ease, growth, maternal value and end product merit. Demand for good commercial females

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foundation for many more such educational forums in the future.

There are always a host of summer field days, state preview shows and junior shows — including the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) this year scheduled for July 13-19 at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines. The folks from Iowa have been planning this event for the past two or three years, and it is predicted to be one of the best ever.

To add to the comfort of the exhibitors and spectators alike, the event will take place in a newly air-conditioned pavilion. What a treat this will be for those of us who remember the sweltering heat at that location in the past.

As has been said on many occasions, the NJAS is the largest and most influential, single-breed activity in the world. If you have never been to one, perhaps this is the time to do it. Believe me; you will come away with a

warm fuzzy feeling, knowing that our breed and Association are in good hands for the future.

I look forward to seeing you at an Angus activity this summer.



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