

## Attending boot camp

*A brainchild of the Industry Relations Division of the American Angus Association, it was called Cattlemen's Boot Camp. The concept was spawned as an offshoot of the highly successful series of Angus outreach seminars, which have been hosted in strategic locations of the country during the past two years for the purpose of addressing current issues affecting the beef industry and detailing new Association programs.*

### Education on the spot

Realizing that Extension services are strapped for resources, it seemed a good idea to explore ways to combine forces and provide much-needed educational information through workshops and lectures to both new seedstock breeders and commercial producers.

The initial thought behind the program was to sponsor a series of industry-related forums in cooperation with leading universities and the education arm of the Angus Foundation. Our initial "think tank" session was conducted with staff and leaders from the Extension service who were excited about the process.

The first Cattlemen's Boot Camp took place at the Agricultural Research, Development & Education Center (ARDEC) at Colorado State University (CSU) in Fort Collins in mid-October. Those of us who endured military service understand what a boot camp is. In true military fashion, the program was indeed just that, with two exceptions: There was no reveille; neither were taps sounded at the end of the day. However, the schedule was rigorous.

### Beef industry education

There were workshops — lots of workshops. In these sessions there were instruction and practical labs on basic aspects

of tattooing and herd identification (ID) numbering, retinal scanning, freeze-branding, pregnancy testing, artificial insemination (AI), and quality assurance (QA) programs.

A review of branded beef programs, featuring *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®), was conducted. Factors considered in calculating grid pricing, as well as traits that affect beef quality, were examined. Participants were amazed at what 100 pounds (lb.) of trim fat — waste fat that has no particular value to the consumer — looked like when placed in plastic bags. Packer closeout sheets were discussed; terms and pricing policies for live cattle were examined.

Additional basic workshops pertaining to both manual and electronic methods of submitting registrations, transfers and performance information were offered. Association services and options available on the Internet via AAA Login were discussed.

Traits of importance in the cow herd and in the feedyard were thoroughly reviewed. The role of AngusSource<sup>SM</sup> as a U.S.

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**REGIONAL MANAGERS**—Refer to page 144.

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Department of Agriculture (USDA) Process-Verified Program (PVP) was explained, as were other tools that create and capture value in each segment of the beef chain.

A marketing panel dissected and explained marketing options for both seedstock and commercial operations. A seminar on genetic values and bioeconomic indexes was given, followed by an interactive discussion of a hypothetical herd's weaknesses and strengths — perhaps the highlight of Boot Camp. Participants were divided into groups and provided a sale

book with expected progeny differences (EPDs) and dollar value indexes (\$Values) on 10 bulls. Sire selections were made and explained, after which a mock auction was conducted.

### **Energizing experience**

The entire Boot Camp was an exciting and stimulating experience for all who attended or were involved. The audience consisted of 60% commercial and 40% seedstock producers, students, Association staff, and CSU faculty.

The facilities were impeccable, the

weather great and the subject matter was perhaps the most comprehensive of any such event in recent history. I would be remiss not to heap accolades and praise on the CSU Seedstock Marketing Team and their professor, Tom Field, for their extraordinary cooperation for this event.

There will be another one soon!



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