

LEAD IN

Richard L. Spader

Executive Vice president, American Angus Association



The spring bull buying season begins soon; in fact, it is underway in parts of the country. And if spring sales follow the pattern set this fall and winter, we can expect one of the best seasons in many years.

Reports from the country coupled with increased business coming through your National office make it appear the Angus breed is positioned for a marked increase in bull demand. This, in turn, will mean an increase in all aspects of our business.

Some of the groundwork has been laid by what appears to be a slight herd build-up, particularly interest in retaining more open heifers on farms and ranches. If we're in the early stages of a buildup, then increased demand for Angus bulls to use on virgin heifers is a reality.

Another factor in the strong Angus demand is the overall quality of Angus bulls today. Take a look at any test station report or the production sales records of most Angus breeders and you'll quickly see that Angus cattle have the eye of the commercial cattle industry. Back these cattle with a sound AHIR program and Sire Evaluation and cattlemen quickly can select Angus that will fit the specific needs of their cow herd. Just this week a commercial breeder from Kansas called this office for the EPDs on a number of bulls. He knows that Angus cattle have what he needs in his crossbreeding program, and he's using records to minimize his risks and improve his profit.

On a national scale, the cattle business also looks better today than it has for many years. More diversified operations look to beef cows as an alternative to production of corn and feed grains that are selling under cost of production. This has improved the demand in many parts of the Midwest for commercial cows and purebred breeders in these areas are seeing a new group of customers.

Within the industry, it's also apparent that cattle producers have searched hard for ways to improve their profits in recent

years. In many cases, this has meant the use of every exotic and new breed available. The result for many has been disastrous, and cattlemen all over the country are returning to Angus to solve some of their problems.

We're also hearing a cry for consistency and uniformity in cattle from both the feedlot and packing industries. What's more, most major packers now demand quality as well as high yields in cattle for their operations. This, coupled with the ever growing CAB program sends the quality-uniformity message to commercial cattlemen, a message we've echoed for years.

Combine this with the strong national advertising and public relations programs of your National Association and the Angus advantage story is told time and time again through publications across the country. Angus ads have highlighted the beef train concept which points out that the seed stock producer, cow-calf man, feeder, packer, retailer, and consumer are all part of the train of beef production and marketing that is driven by the consumer.

Our advertising, along with efforts of the national beef information and advertising program funded by the check-off, have positioned the beef industry for improved demand for years to come.

The upcoming months and years could be the best we've seen in over a decade. Interest in the breed is high and the statistical figures for the first months of 1988 are impressive, including over a 30 percent increase in both adult and junior membership.

It's an exciting time to be in the Angus industry and your Association staff looks forward to working with you as we plan and build for our breed to account for a larger share of the commercial and registered beef cattle market in the years ahead.

