

# Ambassador Aspirations

Angus Ambassador opportunity positions juniors for success. Application deadline is June 15.

Story & photos by **Kasey Brown**, associate editor

The Angus Ambassador position prepares one Angus junior per year for a multifaceted industry.

“The Angus Ambassador is more of a look at the Angus industry instead of just the junior program. It has a higher involvement with the adult association, and lets the ambassador get to

know the industry and all the possibilities available in the future,” says Jaclyn Upperman, director of junior

activities for the American Angus Association.

“The opportunities are endless. The ambassador gets to meet so many ag industry leaders, and that opens the door to the future. How much you want to take it to the next level is up to you. If you really want to excel, this is the program — the door is wide open,” she emphasizes.

With the application deadline for the next Angus Ambassador being June 15, previous ambassadors share insights from their experiences and what the role has to offer.

## Travel opportunities

Once chosen as the Angus Ambassador, a position only two people have held so far, the ambassador doesn't stay in one place for too long. Lauren Adcock, Moweaqua, Ill., native and now a graduate student at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas, says her year as the first Angus Ambassador was a whirlwind year with travel. The 2013 Angus Ambassador, Maci Lienemann, a sophomore at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, agrees.

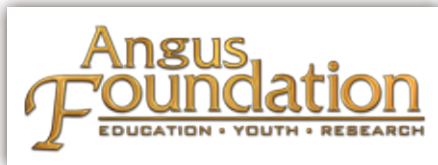
They explain that the Angus Ambassador attends an American Angus Association orientation, a Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) Building

Blocks seminar, the National Angus Conference & Tour, the American Angus Association Annual Meeting (which will be part of the Angus Means Business Convention & Trade Show this November), the Cattle Industry Convention & National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Trade

Show, the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) research symposium, and the Canadian Junior Angus Association's

Guiding Outstanding Angus Leaders (GOAL).

Plus, Adcock says, the ambassador can choose additional conferences or seminars if time and funds allow. Adcock attended the Weight Trait Project in Nebraska. This project is a unified research and outreach project involving seven beef breeds. She notes that each breed had two representatives from



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— **Maci Lienemann**

the breed and junior association. This let her connect and communicate with other cattlemen with different perspectives, and, ultimately, she gained a greater understanding of the end product.

Lienemann attended the Range Beef Cow Symposium in Rapid City, S.D., and the Youth Beef Industry Conference (YBIC) in Saint Louis, Mo., for additional events. While there are quite a few events to attend, she notes that most are well-spaced throughout the year, so staying caught up with school is generally not a problem. However, February is a busy travel month with the Cattle Industry Convention almost immediately before GOAL.

Both ambassadors agree that the Cattle Industry Convention was one of their favorite events.

“There are so many things going on during that conference; it's not just production-focused,” Adcock explains. “You got to listen to people's thoughts on the economy, on the current laws and the farm bill. Overall, it's a way for producers to come together and get off the farm to learn some more about what's going on in the industry. Sometimes, we just get so focused on what's going on on our farm that we don't think about the problems that the agriculture industry is facing.”

Lienemann says attending the different sessions at the Cattle Industry Convention helped her gain valuable insight into many aspects of the beef industry.

The knowledge gained from all of these conferences has helped both ladies.

“The Ambassador position is focused on the industry portion of the Angus Association

and more interaction with the adult association rather than the already familiar junior programs,” Lienemann notes. “Gaining a broader perspective of the industry shows you how you can have a practical application of the skills and experiences gained both as a junior and in school to current

issues and your future career.

“If you have any interest in a future involving livestock, more specifically cattle, whether it is owning your own operation or working to improve the industry in another way (i.e., as a geneticist, journalist, market analyst, etc.), then serving as the ambassador is a terrific way to get a broader view of the

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industry and put you in a position to excel,” she continues. “The people that you meet at the various events and the relationships you form will be extremely beneficial to you in the future. The knowledge you gain and what you choose to do with that knowledge, along with the people you meet, really make the position worth it.”

Adcock says attending these conferences helped collect some thoughts to use in her graduate program, and she has gone into her program with a leg up.

“There are some very controversial issues that go on within our industry,” she explains. “There are some things that need to be studied that haven’t been studied yet. I take what I learned from those conferences and apply it to my thesis project. I’m studying the fresh meat characteristics and palatability traits of branded beef programs. I feel like I’ve gone in knowing a lot more than most kids from an industry standpoint — not just from books — and the importance of those branded programs in the industry.”

Young people can gain a lot from attending these conferences, Adcock says. It may be within the next week or the next month, but she says you realize the information learned from these conferences is relevant, forward-thinking and often cutting-edge.

### Importance of networking

Attending so many conferences through the year offers the Angus Ambassador many opportunities to meet industry leaders. Lienemann explains that her part-time job at school is due to a contact she made at her first ambassador event.

While attending the National Angus Conference & Tour, she sat next to Gary Felger, a regional representative for Igenity. Lienemann is interested in genetics but didn’t have much laboratory experience. GeneSeek has a laboratory in Lincoln, and Felger told her that help was needed in the evenings and weekends. He put her in contact to apply, and she earned a part-time position in the laboratory.

Additionally, she says, you keep seeing some of the same people at multiple events. She saw Felger again at the Cattle Industry Convention and also met the head of the GeneSeek office in Lincoln.

“The networking has been, by far, one of the most valuable parts of the year,” Lienemann says. “The great part about being the ambassador is that the networking keeps compounding. You’re able to meet people and engage in conversation, and then you are

able to further those relationships throughout the year.”

Adcock notes that as ambassador, she met the whole gamut of the industry. She met other juniors, in different breeds and different countries; other graduate students; university professors and researchers; producers of all breeds; consumers; and allied industry officials.

She adds that when meeting all these people, “You’re the face of the breed outside the junior program, so it is always important to make sure you’re holding yourself up to a higher standard. Others’ perception of the Angus breed is dependent upon your knowledge and understanding of the industry.

“Knowing the benefits of the Angus breed for different types of operations and the benefits of CAB (Certified Angus Beef LLC) was important. I’m asked about that now just as a graduate student. That knowledge has helped me be a better teacher, and a better and more knowledgeable producer,” she says.

The Angus Ambassador generates enthusiasm for the breed, to other breeds’ cattlemen and within the Association. Lienemann says she contributed two articles to the National Junior Angus Association’s *Directions* newsletter. Upperman notes that future responsibilities will include writing blog posts, too.

Lienemann emphasizes that the Angus Ambassador isn’t sent to conferences without resources. The ambassador attends an orientation at the American Angus Association headquarters in Saint Joseph, Mo., and a CAB Building Blocks seminar in Wooster, Ohio. However, she recommends that an ambassador still needs to take the initiative to stay abreast of industry information and be knowledgeable to make the most of the experiences offered.

### Advice

For any eligible juniors who plan to apply for the Angus Ambassador position, both previous ambassadors suggest keeping up with current events in the beef industry. Five applicants get chosen for the final round at the Association headquarters.

During this final round, applicants are interviewed and asked to create a 10- to 15-minute presentation about an issue of their choosing in the beef industry. Lienemann suggests picking something in



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**— Lauren Adcock**

which you are interested and informed, and making sure it is significant and timely. She recommends staying current with resources like the *Angus Journal*, *BEEF Magazine*, *Progressive Cattleman*, the American Angus Association and other industry-related periodicals and websites to stay informed. She suggests forming an opinion for forward action on the topic of your presentation.

Adcock emphasizes that previous experience in the showing has no effect on Angus Ambassador selection. This position is selected on industry knowledge and poise. She recalls being asked questions about the topic of her presentation, but also questions in different fields.

“Be enthusiastic about the breed, be knowledgeable about your topic and have a passion for the beef industry,” Adcock suggests.

“This program definitely sets you up for success. Going to these conferences and meeting people in the industry can help give you a better perspective, especially about aspects that you may not have learned in your major at college. I was an ag economics major, but I learned about animal science, genetics, feed efficiency and performance at these conferences. This helped set me up to be a leader in the beef industry,” Adcock concludes.

For more information about applying for the Angus Ambassador program, sponsored by the Angus Foundation, visit [www.angus.org/NJAA/Awards/Ambassador\\_Program.pdf](http://www.angus.org/NJAA/Awards/Ambassador_Program.pdf), or call the Junior Activities Department at 816-383-5100.

