



Editor's Mailbox

► Readers' viewpoints submitted to our staff

Voicing concern

I am very disappointed and disturbed by the recent actions of our Board of Directors and CEO who terminated the heart of our great staff at the American Angus Association. The 12 terminated and others that were placed on probation have played an important role in the Association being the largest, most proficient cattle organization in the world, and they represent some 300 years of experience and dedication to the association, its members and the entire industry.

The board and CEO have done harm to not only its 30,000 members, but to the entire beef industry, [which is] trying desperately to find a way to produce more pounds of beef with less inputs to feed the world's growing population. The Angus database was playing a significant role in this great cause by identifying genetics that have that capability. Those that not only developed the database, but kept adding to it to assure its accuracy, are now gone.

In my opinion there is no doubt that the current board has done greater harm to the Angus Association than any competing meat or predator organization could ever do.

It is hard to understand the reasoning of the board to allow this sudden massive termination without first bringing in professional mediators to locate and help solve any internal problems that might have existed.

I believe the membership deserved that consideration after trusting the current board to guide the Association to greater heights rather than dismantling and removing the Association's staff that was considered to be

the best in the entire industry. I find it very disheartening that a board and its CEO would place personal agenda ahead of doing what was best for the Association. They have caused the greatest disruption in the American Angus Association's history spanning some 133 years.

— **Minnie Lou Bradley**,
Bradley 3 Ranch, Texas

Responding to concerns

First, I have the greatest admiration for breeders such as Minnie Lou Bradley, a true icon in the cattle business, and others who have expressed concern regarding actions that took place at the American Angus Association earlier this year. I, therefore, respectfully respond to her letter.

There has been much discussion centered on the departure of 12 members of the Association staff, announced April 11, 2014. The details of that departure are outlined in letters posted to www.angus.org, and I invite all members to review them (find April 11 announcement at <http://bit.ly/1sbcXIQ> and April 16 letter from the board at <http://bit.ly/1nx8uK0>).

While personnel matters cannot be publicly disclosed, the actions we have taken did not occur in haste; in fact, prior to the April 11 announcement, the concerns raised by 15 staff members in their March 21 letter underwent extensive review, including three meetings of the Board of Directors and two days of in-depth interviews of 25 staff members conducted by a board-appointed task force.

Understandably, this unforeseen circumstance has caused questions and concern from many of you pertaining to the

welfare of our organization and, specifically, our performance programs.

Let me assure you, the American Angus Association and its Board of Directors remain committed to our breed's unparalleled genetic evaluation services and their continued success and evolution. The database that we all value remains safe within the walls of Association headquarters and at the heart of our organization.

Our members are able to conduct business, submit data and trouble-shoot with Association representatives every day, just as before. We maintain our well-known 24-hour-turnaround time and in-house proficiencies. We continue to release an accurate, reliable and weekly National Cattle Evaluation (NCE) and conduct our extensive genomic work, which can exceed 2,000 DNA samples processed per day.

We have not departed from our responsibilities as the largest beef breed organization in the world, thanks to the hard work and continued business operations of the 90-plus people employed at the Association who continue to serve our membership.

The actions that originated with the March 21 letter understandably caused concern within our Angus community, but they have neither negatively affected the value of our data nor our trajectory as the dominating force in beef cattle genetics. The Angus breed's role in the beef industry, and its efforts to produce more pounds of beef with fewer inputs, is unchanged.

Regarding the future, we are moving forward. We're proceeding with plans for another recalibration and the introduction of

Angus Journal Rolls Back Ad Prices to 1979

Reserve a space today in the publication's August 35th anniversary issue.

In celebration of the *Angus Journal's* 35th year of service to the beef industry under the ownership of the American Angus Association, the August publication is rolling back selected advertising rates to 1979 prices. All Angus breeders and potential advertisers are encouraged to take advantage of these one-time special rates, which include a full-page black-and-white ad for \$525.

"In many ways, the *Angus Journal* is an indispensable partner for cattlemen who rely on Angus genetics," says Eric Grant, *Angus Journal* general manager. "The publication has not only survived, but thrived within a changing media environment, and we look forward to commemorating our 35th year in August."

In addition to the special advertising rates, the *Angus Journal* will launch an editorial campaign centered on "35 keys to success" in

the cattle business. Topics will range from herd health to customer service, grazing strategies to recordkeeping, and much more. Look for these features starting in the August 2014 issue.

To reserve an advertising space in the commemorative issue, contact *Angus Journal* Advertising Coordinators Doneta Brown or Karri Mildenerger. Deadline is June 20.

The 1979 rates are: a full page for \$525; a half-page by three-column ad for \$275; and a half-page by two-column ad for \$300. Color and bleed can be added at regular 2014 pricing. More details can be found online.

For more information on the *Angus Journal*, visit www.angusjournal.com.

a genomic-enhanced tenderness expected progeny difference (EPD). We've named a vice president of operations; we've reworked our events and education arm and named associated staff; and have interviewed several candidates for performance programs and regional manager positions. By publication, I anticipate many of these will be filled.

Our future as an organization is bright despite the recent challenges. The Association and the Angus breed remain strong, but we can strengthen it even further by working through our differences and coming together. I welcome your continued feedback, and I ask that you join me in taking a positive step in moving forward.

— **Bryce Schumann**,
CEO, American Angus Association

Leave it to private industry

Why is the U.S. government spending \$9 million when animal agriculture has similar technology already available or in the pipeline?

If you're like me, you have attended more meetings than you care to count where government officials urge private companies in animal agriculture to step up to the plate and fund new research and technology. Thus, my jaw literally dropped to the floor when, on May 2, I read an article, "DHS Expands Animal Disease Surveillance Project," stating that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was underwriting an animal disease surveillance project with The National Center for Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense. According to the article, the DHS Enhanced Passive Surveillance (EPS) system project has "the potential for a nearly \$9 million investment over the next three years."

While I applaud the idea behind the DHS EPS system, which is designed to help individuals working with animals to easily report potential disease outbreaks and changes in animal health, I am baffled why DHS didn't first investigate if a private company within animal agriculture wasn't already addressing this need.

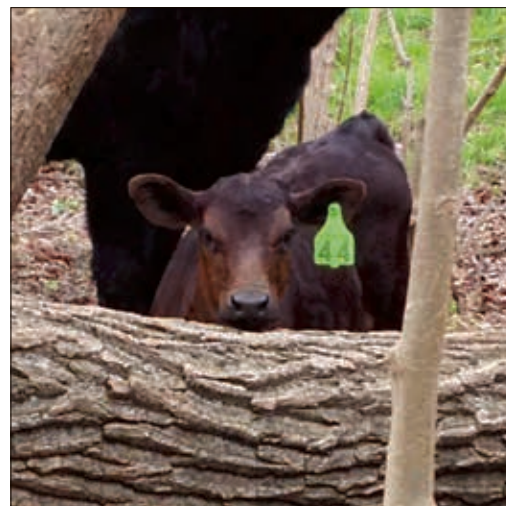
Today's veterinarians and state animal health officials already have online connectivity, as well as instant online access and a searchable database that allows for quicker response and containment of animal disease diagnosis and outbreaks in an emergency situation. I am also aware of real-time technology under development in animal agriculture that will soon have the capability to integrate and aggregate data — and meet the same goals as the EPS system. Private industry systems will be no cost to taxpayers!

— **Teres Lambert**, Windsor, Colo.

Questioning McDonald's on sustainability

I wanted to make a statement on

Photos from Facebook



This is my favorite time of year!

— **Stacy Sissler**

sustainability. I do not think there has been anyone in the beef industry that has done more to damage the sustainability of beef production than McDonald's. When I grew up in Sheridan, Wyo., we had many small restaurants that served hamburger that was produced locally, killed locally and distributed locally. We never had a case of *E. coli* O157 [that] created a massive recall, and the average person consumed more than 70 pounds of beef a year.

Along came the golden arches, and they did not want to buy local beef; they distributed their own through a system of buying the cheapest cows they could find, then processing them to ¼-pound burgers that shrank down to the size of a wax paper. Because they had no flavor, they created their own spreads and a sesame-seed bun. All of this was to produce a burger they could sell for 13¢ without a drink.

Walmart has a similar track record for destroying communities by offering cheap products that downtown merchants cannot compete with. We cannot have sustainable agriculture without sustainable communities to market our products. The system of food production and distribution we now have is very risky because it is so centrally organized.

Sheridan, Wyo., was once a community that had its own flour mill, sugar factory, federally inspected slaughter facility, six tractor dealers, and two feed supply stores that would take locally produced grain and make complete mixed rations for cattle, sheep and hogs. They employed more than 20 people in just those two feed stores. We now have one with no feed batching at all; everything is hauled in from elsewhere.

The main driver in the good old days was quality, something Walmart and McDonald's don't care about. I do not believe we can

survive into the future without working on quality. There is a crisis about to happen in ag where the next generation cannot afford to buy the ranch. To be fair to all non-participating members, ranches will be sold at real-estate prices and the money split. The next owners may not want to produce beef, but only own the land to hunt or some other event.

— **Matt Cherni**, MS, DVM

Positive reviews

I really enjoyed your inspirational quote in the May edition of the *Angus Journal* ("Angus Stakes," page 12). Made me think that I better not waste time thinking about my animal in a sale that didn't bring as much as another one, even when I thought mine was better. Wasting my day on wishing I had something I don't have won't make me any better off. I promise you after reading your message, I'll do something more positive with this day — and tomorrow, too. Thanks for making me think!

P.S. I've been on Facebook for several years and never knew what LOL meant.

— **Jerry Gustin**, Gloucester, Va.

This announcement concerning the new API changes and the promoting of Eric Grant as president and general manager is very exciting to me! I have known Eric for several years, and have worked with him on several projects in the past. Your decision to elevate him to this status is certainly well-considered, and I commend you for your efforts. Knowing him as I do, he will extend the activities of the Association business into the future and keep the Angus beef breed in the forefront of beef production worldwide for years to come.

— **Rod Harris (Doc Harris)**,
Fort Collins, Colo.

