

No. 2 tries harder

During the course of conversing with a portion of our membership, I hear comments occasionally expressing the idea that the American Angus Association Board of Directors and staff are moving too rapidly in adopting new genetic and management tools.

Frustration surfaces

The following is an example:

John,

Just finished reading your article ("Up Front") in the Angus Journal. I just want to express my feelings. I am glad to see the Angus breed trying to stay on top of everything, but you are throwing way too much out. I for one am getting tired of all the fancy terms and new EPDs (expected progeny differences) you are throwing out. A cattleman could spend all his time trying to figure out what all this means, and I'm not sure if he did figure it out if he would have more money in his pocket when it was all

done.

— A very confused Angus breeder

My reply follows:

Thanks. I appreciate the fact that you wrote me about your frustration. I would be the first to agree that the business of producing beef has gotten complicated. In fact, it's very hard to make a living in agriculture, simply because there are so many variables we can't control.

What we can do, however, is characterize the Angus breed for those things that affect profit and consumer acceptance of beef. And that is what your elected Board of Directors has done in developing values that aid you and other producers in selecting the kind and type of cattle that best suit you and your customers. The dollar values (\$Values) are based on real-world prices producers receive for their cattle.

We are enjoying good times in the Angus business. The sales reported by regional managers last year indicated that Angus bulls brought \$466 more than the previous year. We are convinced that this is a direct result of the genetic and economic programs we have in place and the value that the Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) program has established for high-quality beef and beef products.

Again, I can understand your frustration and would be happy to discuss this by phone should you wish to give me a call.

Dealing with progress

This member's reaction is not abnormal. Progress is sometimes difficult to accept. A review of history reveals constant change stimulated by a continuous evolution in technology and programs in the beef industry. Further study of the history of organizations identifies patterns of behavior that can lead to decay.

First, there is excitement in discovering that goals are within reach. Then come hard work and more excitement as various levels of success are achieved. More hard work and planning follow until, finally, the goal is reached.

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President—Shirley Williams, Van Buren, Ark. For a complete list of officers, visit www.angusauxiliary.com.

REGIONAL MANAGERS—Refer to pages 284-285.

CERTIFIED ANGUS BEEF LLC

President—Jim Riemann, Wooster, Ohio
 For a CAB staff listing, refer to page 142.

The next emotions expressed are gratitude for and pride in a task well done; the summit has been reached, the race won. All is well — except for the fact that no one told the other competitors the race was over. The one in second place kept running.

Next come contentment and comfort, then apathy and lethargy. Suddenly, No. 2 begins where No. 1 left off, and the entire process begins anew as a different leader emerges. It happens to companies, civilizations, baseball teams, breeds and

breed organizations.

The irony is that it doesn't have to happen. No matter how successful we become, we can always be better. At our annual banquet in Louisville, Ky., last November, keynote speaker Rick Rigsby said, "Good is not good enough if it can be better. And better is not good enough if it can be best."

During the last couple of years, the Association has developed new EPDs for reproduction and a suite of \$Value indexes that more clearly define the route to

increased efficiency and profit. Too complicated? To the contrary, these values offer a much more simplistic approach to the process of selecting seedstock, especially for commercial cattlemen.

We — as leaders in the beef industry — must take ownership of these improvement



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