

# Get Involved

The National Junior Angus Association offers opportunities for fun, leadership and responsibility.

by Brooke Byrd

As the largest junior beef breed organization in the world, the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) encourages young people to get involved with all aspects of the Angus world. The organization has evolved to include more than 10,000 active members from all parts of the United States and Canada. Started in 1956, the purpose of the NJAA was to encourage involvement in and to improve Angus steer and heifer projects.

"Today that purpose has been expanded to include more projects and programs that help juniors develop their skills and characters," says James Fisher, American Angus Association director of activities and junior activities. "As an NJAA member, you may choose from a wide variety of activities and programs that offer real-world experience. Members learn new skills and meet new friends."



## National resources

The first place to start for juniors getting involved in the NJAA is through the Association Junior Activities Department. The department offers resources and links to other groups, as well as putting on several national events. A newsletter, *Directions*, is also mailed twice a year to all active members under 21 years of age.

Shelia Stannard, Association director of activity communications and event coordinator, notes that the annual National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) and Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) Conference are great ways to get involved on the national level (visit

[www.njas.info](http://www.njas.info) or [www.njaa.info/lead.html](http://www.njaa.info/lead.html) for more information).

"Both these events enable Angus youth to form lasting friendships while enhancing their interpersonal skills and beef industry knowledge," says Stannard, who is an advisor to the NJAA Board of Directors.

Other programs on the national level include the chance to participate on the NJAA Board of Directors, the National Junior Recognition Program and junior Angus scholarships (see "Angus opportunities").

Also provided to juniors on the national level is a variety of educational literature, including a forthcoming piece about selecting, feeding, raising, showing, feeding and judging cattle. Currently available is a video about livestock judging, as well as the NJAA informational packet, which contains information about shows, contests and the LEAD Conference.

Juniors can submit entries to many shows online through [www.njaa.info/shows.html](http://www.njaa.info/shows.html), and Association staff can help get animals transferred in time for show deadlines.

The Association can also provide contact details for state, regional and local junior associations. They're also available at [www.njaa.info/njaa\\_assoc.html](http://www.njaa.info/njaa_assoc.html).

## Looking locally

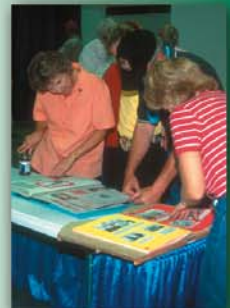
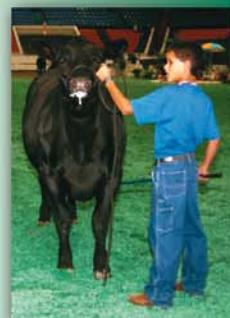
There are currently about 65 state, regional and local junior Angus associations. "These groups have meetings, sponsor shows and field days, and take an active part in

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## Angus opportunities

Members of the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) have the opportunity to participate in a variety of contests and to compete for several scholarships and awards.

- ▶ **Angus contests** — Junior members do not have to exhibit cattle at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in order to participate. The National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest gives state showmanship winners the chance to compete against each other. Several other contests, including speaking, cooking, photography, writing and graphic design, are open to all juniors. For some contests, juniors do not even have to attend the NJAS. Finally, there are several contests that junior state groups can participate in, such as scrapbook, herdsmanship, team sales and quiz bowl. Locally, some states also offer similar contests for their junior members.
- ▶ **Recognition program** — The National Junior Recognition Program rewards deserving juniors for hard work, participation and success in junior Angus programs. The three levels of recognition — bronze, silver and gold — are each earned by accumulating points through participation and success in a variety of Angus activities. The showing isn't the only measure of success, as juniors can earn points for serving as officers, selling cattle and recording weights in the American Angus Association's performance program.
- ▶ **Scholarships** — Each year, several scholarships are awarded to Angus juniors. The American Angus Auxiliary, Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB), NJAA and Angus Foundation offer scholarships on the national level, while many states also reward their juniors with scholarships.
- ▶ **Individual recognition** — Several awards are given to individual juniors who excel in Angus activities, including several given specifically for excellence at the NJAS. The Outstanding Leadership Award recognizes one outstanding NJAA member each year and is based on leadership demonstrated through Angus and other activities.



the Angus business and breed promotion,” Fisher notes.

“I encourage young people to get involved on the state and local levels, as that is where you learn the basics about getting involved, leadership and responsibility,” Fisher says.

Stannard adds, “Youth with an interest in the Angus breed should definitely get involved with the NJAA and with their state junior Angus associations.”

Local junior Angus associations often have their own shows, contests, leadership

conferences, meetings, banquets, and other activities and events. Several state junior associations have their own Web sites with photos, calendars and profiles.

Nancy Thelen, Saline, Mich., says that as an advisor to the Michigan Junior Angus Association, she tries to find out what individuals’ specific interests are. “Then, I start telling them about different activities they might choose to participate in,” she says.

**The May and  
September issues  
of the *Angus Journal*  
are sent to junior  
members each year.**

“I also invite them to whatever our first activity is.”

Michigan has several chances for new members to get involved, such as social activities at cattle shows,

workshops and a mentoring program. Meetings are also conducted to organize juniors to go to the NJAS and discuss opportunities for those not attending.

Advisor to the Tennessee Junior Angus Association, Steve May, Hurricane Mills,

Tenn., works to set up activities and meetings just for the juniors. "Whereas most other meetings are associated with a show or sale, this is strictly for the kids," he says. "We have more planning, more time, and don't have to worry about feeding or washing calves." New junior members receive a welcome letter listing chances to get involved and may also be contacted by a director in their regions.

The NJAA Board of Directors can also direct juniors in ways to get involved locally

(see "Next Gen," page 52, for contact information).

### **The road to success**

"The junior programs offer so many opportunities to learn and grow personally, as well as a network to form lasting friendships," Stannard explains. "Being involved in the NJAA isn't just about showing cattle, but learning more about responsibility and leadership."

"Each year more junior members join the

American Angus Association than any other cattle organization," Fisher says. "They are our strong foundation for expansion and improvement for the Angus breed in the future."

NJAA membership is open to anyone younger than 21 years of age within the United States and Canada. Members pay an annual membership fee of \$20, which entitles them to active junior membership status. For more information contact the Junior Activities Department at (816) 383-5100. 