

Angus Lit 101

Updated publications and literature help spread the Angus word.

by Brooke Byrd

Even the most experienced cattlemen don't know everything about the Angus breed and the cattle business. Odds are, most cattle-buying customers don't either. For those seeking to learn more or to help others understand what Angus has to offer, the American Angus Association offers a wide range of literature and publications.

"All of our literature is available to members free of charge, even in quantities of 25 or 50," says Shelia Stannard, Association director of activity communications and event coordinator. The publications available cover a broad spectrum of Angus-related information, including pieces for juniors,

those just starting with the Angus breed or those well-established.

Association publications take detailed, often complex information and scale it down into bite-size pieces, Stannard says. "We try to make literature very basic and educational so people can sit down and read it in an hour or two. We don't want them to have to study over it, because we know they don't have time."

Literature is also continuously updated as Association programs and services, technology, and the Angus breed change. The following four publications have recently been updated and revamped to allow producers using Angus genetics access



to the most current and helpful information possible.

Forming a future

A new publication for juniors, titled *Forming a Future*, is now available to help newcomers get started in the Angus business. This piece combines previous brochures about selecting, feeding and caring for an Angus heifer; fitting and showing; and judging into one comprehensive resource. It also discusses the need for planning before buying a heifer, such as setting goals, understanding one's financial situation, and determining necessary resources such as corrals and feed.

"We've arranged it so it is easy to use," Stannard says. "Each section is color-coded to make it more understandable and fun to read." Other updates include an introduction to performance data — how to use an animal's expected progeny differences (EPDs) in selection — and revamped fitting illustrations and tips, as well as a glossary with industry terms in everyday language.

This publication is directed toward younger members, Stannard says. "We want to encourage membership, and we want it to be easy for new members to get involved. If they start out right and have success when they're young, they're probably going to continue with the program.

"This particular piece will be really good for people who sell heifers to junior members or if they have a field day at their farm or ranch," Stannard continues.

She also notes that while geared toward younger members, the publication is helpful as a resource for anyone inexperienced with the Angus business. "It talks about setting goals, understanding resources and being able to work within your means to start your Angus herd," she says. "It's a detailed, comprehensive piece for anyone getting started."

Educating new members

Instead of receiving one envelope with every available publication as soon as they join, new members of the American Angus Association now stay in contact with staff for three months, receiving three separate packets.

"When new members join the Association, that's a critical time to help them understand what they're a part of and let them know how they can get involved," says Sara Moyer, Association director of industry and member communications. "We decided to reach out to them three times and let them know all Angus has to offer."

Sending new members information in three separate mailings also gives them more time to digest and understand each publication, instead of feeling overwhelmed by too much at once, Moyer notes.

The first mailing is a basic overview of the Association and its departments, philosophy, and programs and services. The second packet includes information about registration, the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) program, performance data and the tools given back to producers. The third explains other Association programs such as AngusSourceSM, Angus Information Management Software (AIMS), the Angus Foundation and junior activities.

Perhaps the most important part of sending all these publications, Moyer says, is the inclusion of contact information and further resources on every piece. "Whatever members' interests, they can find more information through the Association or online," she says. "We want to make them feel like they're a part of the Association."

Beef Improvement Records

The new publication about Beef Improvement Records (BIR) combines information on two Association programs — Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) and the Beef Record Service (BRS). Sara Moyer, Association director of industry and member communications, says since many aspects of the two programs are similar, such as methods and details of submitting data, creating a single publication has streamlined information and made program details less complicated.

Explanations of all EPDs have been updated, and \$Value indexes are explained in simplified terms. Proper methods of collecting and submitting data are also detailed.

“This piece is meant for registered breeders or commercial cattlemen who want to keep performance records on their cattle,” Moyer notes. “It lets them know about the two programs we have that allow them to submit data and get back selection tools and information about their herds.

“It goes out to all of our new members, letting them know that performance is the basis for what we do here.”

Bull-buying strategies

The *Bull-Buying Strategies* publication explains how to assess a herd’s specific needs and how to use Association programs and services to make changes. Fully updated with new EPDs and \$Values and descriptions of what they mean and how to use them, Moyer says, “It’s targeted for commercial producers who want to look within their herds, evaluate them and set herd goals.”

Presented in a question-and-answer format, this publication helps answer common questions producers may have about how to make directional changes in their herds. “By helping producers establish marketing goals and understanding the type of cow herd they have, this piece can help cattlemen understand exactly what they need when they purchase a bull,” Moyer explains.

She also recommends this publication as a tool for seedstock producers. “By handing out this piece, seedstock producers can help commercial producers understand what their bulls can offer and why EPDs matter,” she notes. She suggests having this and other Association publications on hand at sales and field days to help familiarize commercial producers with Association programs and services.

Angus advantages

The main promotional piece for the American Angus Association and the Angus breed, *Angus Advantages* has been

thoroughly updated and revamped to include descriptions of new Association programs and services, changes in technology, and changes in industry terms and language. The brochure highlights the breed’s genetic advantages and marketing benefits, as well as valuable Association programs and services.

“It’s a broad overview of Angus cattle, the Association and what they can do for the beef industry,” Moyer explains. “Angus is the most popular beef cattle breed and dominates the industry, but why? It’s the biological advantages of the cattle, Association programs and services, and the

database. You buy Angus cattle, but it doesn’t end there. There’s so much more the Association can help you with once you have that animal.

“*Angus Advantages* puts all the pieces together to show the big picture of what Angus has to offer,” she says.

For more information on obtaining these or any other Association publications, visit www.angus.org/pubs/lit/pr_lit_list.html or call the Industry and Member Communications Department at (816) 383-5100.

