

# Field Notes

► by **Jerry Cassidy, David Mullins and Jared Murnin**, regional managers, and **Ty Groshans**, assistant director of commercial programs, American Angus Association

## AngusSource<sup>SM</sup> provides customer service

*As the need for source and genetic information continues to grow in the beef cattle industry, more and more producers are turning to the AngusSource<sup>SM</sup> program. Enrollment in the program, which provides valuable source, genetic, age and management information, has increased 75% in the past year. American Angus Association regional managers and Ty Groshans, assistant director of commercial programs, offer insight about how producers can best utilize the program.*

### What is AngusSource?

**Jared Murnin:** AngusSource is a marketing program that identifies Angus-sired cattle. It identifies the group age and the ranch of origin of the cattle. Cattle that are enrolled in the program are identified by the official AngusSource tag.

**Ty Groshans:** The AngusSource program was created to enhance the value of Angus-sired feeder cattle and replacement females by providing valuable genetic, source and age information to buyers. To be eligible for the AngusSource program, cattle must be sired by a registered Angus bull, enrolled by the ranch of origin and have a known group age.

Individual birth dates are not required. All cattle enrolled together will have a group age of the first day of the month of birth of the oldest calf. So, if the first calf was born in September 2005,

all calves would have a group age of Sept. 1, 2005.

Enrolled cattle are identified with an AngusSource tag. Visual tags are available for \$1 per head, and radio frequency identification (RFID) matched-pair sets are available for \$3.25. Cattle must be wearing an AngusSource tag to be recognized within the program.

### How is the information documented with the AngusSource program?

**Groshans:** An AngusSource Document listing the genetic, source and group age information of the "lot" (group of cattle enrolled together) is created for all cattle enrolled in AngusSource. This document can be printed off by the producer and presented to potential buyers, or buyers can request the document directly from the Association if they do not receive it at the time of sale.

In addition, producers have the opportunity to document additional process and management practices by customizing the AngusSource Document for feeder cattle and/or replacement females. This customized document for use in marketing can include information such as vaccination history, past feedyard data, breeding information, and sale location and date.

### What marketing support is offered through AngusSource?

**Groshans:** The AngusSource program provides producers an opportunity to get paid for what they are producing. Angus genetics are in demand. By identifying cattle as Angus, producers can differentiate their cattle from other black-hided cattle. Source and age information is increasingly important in today's market. AngusSource allows producers to document all this information with one easy-to-use program and then market their cattle as genetics-, source- and age-verified.

If a producer customizes the AngusSource document and includes sale information, the cattle are listed online and the information is sent via e-mail to more than 400 potential buyers.

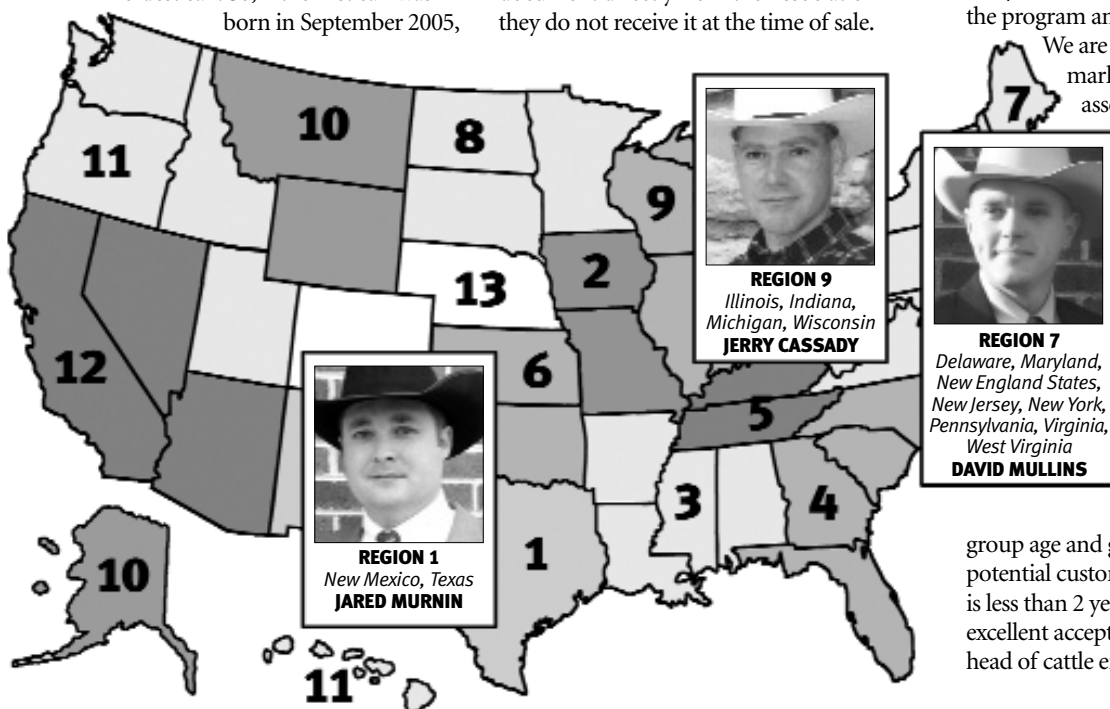
We are continuing to work to educate feedyards, order buyers and packers about the program and the value of cattle enrolled.

We are working with auction markets, video auctions and state associations to establish special AngusSource sales.

### If AngusSource is a program for commercial cattle, why should I, as a seedstock producer, be interested in it?

**Jerry Cassidy:** The American Angus Association has offered the AngusSource program to provide a marketing program allowing producers to verify source,

group age and genetic information to potential customers. Although the program is less than 2 years old, it has enjoyed excellent acceptance, with more than 83,000 head of cattle enrolled.



AngusSource has been designed for feeder calves and replacement females who are sired by registered Angus bulls. You as a seedstock producer are the source of the registered Angus bulls in this equation. Whether you are selling and transferring registered Angus bulls to the commercial sector or raising commercial feeder calves and replacement females, you need to become familiar with the AngusSource program and how its potential benefits can assist your operation.

Many have used the program as a selling tool to attract buyers to their bull sales, even offering to pay a percentage of the subsequent enrollment fee. As national identification (ID), source verification and age verification become standard production practices, programs like AngusSource will become more important and benefit seedstock and commercial producers alike.

#### How does the BIR tag differ from the AngusSource tag?

**David Mullins:** The Beef Improvement Records (BIR) tag is a standard RFID tag. This option allows producers to purchase tags for those cattle that do not fit the specifications for the AngusSource tagging program. The BIR tag allows producers to take advantage of the efficiencies RFID technology offers, regardless of the breed makeup of their cattle.

#### Have seedstock and/or commercial producers used AngusSource tags in your region?

**Murnin:** Some seedstock producers in my area have reimbursed their bull customers for the cost of the tags. This has helped these seedstock producers provide another service to their customers. Also, some producers have used the program to identify and market Angus-sired replacement females with great success.

**For more information about the AngusSource<sup>SM</sup> program, visit [www.angussource.org](http://www.angussource.org), or call the American Angus Association at (816) 383-5100.**



reach their designed potential. AngusSource has been no exception. I do feel that few programs have ever been offered with more potential or have added as much value to the registration paper as the AngusSource program.

#### How can Angus breeders make better use of the AngusSource program for their customer?

**Murnin:** Angus producers can use this program to help their customers pool feeder calves to make load lots. They can also use this program to help their customers market and receive a premium for replacement-quality females. This could help Angus producers by giving them an added service to their valued customers by giving their customers some assistance in marketing calves sired by their bulls.

**Mullins:** For years, purebred producers have struggled to find more effective methods of assisting and communicating with their commercial bull buyers. Currently, there are a few seedstock producers who are offering their bull customers a reimbursement for the price of the AngusSource tags that are placed in the calves sired by their bulls. This allows the purebred breeder the opportunity to visit with their customers and gather information about sire groups and possible genetic decisions that may be more beneficial down the road. In turn, if these tags create increased revenue or new marketing opportunities for the commercial bull buyer, then they will likely return to purchase additional bulls in the future.

**Cassady:** Yes, and it has been very successful. However, I realize that my region has not yet utilized the AngusSource program to its fullest extent. New programs take time to grow and

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