

State Spotlight Series:

This is the tenth in a series of articles featuring the programs and services of some of the leading state Angus associations.

South Dakota's Focus

This state association strives to create opportunities for the future through its junior Angus members.

by *Kindra Gordon*

With 15,568 Angus cattle registered from South Dakota in 2003, the state ranks 5th in the nation for registrations, and the Angus breed is prevalent across the state. To maintain that interest and enthusiasm for the breed, the South Dakota Angus Association (SDAA) is focusing on developing Angus devotees among the next generation — its youth.

Thus, this state association and its active auxiliary sponsor many annual events to support the South Dakota Junior Angus Association (SDJAA).

Their lengthy list of annual accomplishments includes a summer purebred Angus show and commercial steer show where animals must be sired by Angus genetics; an open class breed show and futurity show at the State Fair; a queen contest; youth scholarships; and the Elite steer and heifer sale, hosted annually during the last Saturday in October in Mitchell.

Other outreach activities for the state's membership include the *South Dakota Angus News*, a publication produced four times

Hills Angus Association in the West and the Southeast Angus Association on the other side of the state. Both groups host their own unique events during the year for members in their districts and to promote the Angus breed.

Excited about the future

Regarding the outlook for South Dakota Angus activities, Erica Styles, Brentford, who has served as president of the South Dakota Angus Auxiliary for the past three years, says, "We are growing and seeing more families becoming involved." Styles, her husband, Chris, and their two young children raise Angus with Chris' parents, Bob and Lucy Styles. Chris also serves as vice president of the state association.

Styles adds that many of the shows and events sponsored by the state association and auxiliary play an important role because they help create a sense of excitement and pride among those involved with the breed.

Angus breeders Kevin and Helen Geppert of Mitchell echo that sentiment. They say the delegation of kids, parents and cattle that represented South Dakota at the recent National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Kansas City, Mo., are a prime example of that, as they experienced the thrill of coming

throughout the year; a regular fall tour that rotates around the state to showcase different Angus operations; and an annual meeting and banquet hosted each February in conjunction with the Watertown Winter Farm Show, where an outstanding breeder is honored by the state association.

Additionally, South Dakota has two district Angus Associations — the Black



► Erica Styles, president of the South Dakota Angus Auxiliary, hands out halters donated by the auxiliary at the junior field day at Huron, S.D.

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► **Above:** The auxiliary hosts an appreciation meal after the Angus show at the South Dakota State Fair.

► **Right:** The SDAA hosts an annual meeting and banquet each February in Watertown in conjunction with the Watertown Farm Show.



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together for a common cause — proudly representing their state's Angus program.

"No big awards were won, but it was the working together among the kids while we were there that was exciting to see," say Kevin and Helen, whose three children are actively involved in the junior Angus program. Additionally, Kevin serves as secretary/treasurer of the SDAA.

The Gepperts point out that whether it's a national, regional or state show, the enthusiasm and cooperative spirit among the youth usually spills over to the parents, which in turn helps get them more involved and eager about future Angus activities as well.

Beyond the showing

Those involved with South Dakota Angus events report that participation is expanding. South Dakota's delegation to the 2004 NJAS included 14 juniors and 34 head — the largest group they've ever had attend. Nearly 80 head were shown at the state's 2004 summer Angus show — more than twice as many as last year. And, South Dakota Angus enthusiasts are also considering hosting a regional show in the future.

Shally Rogen, an advisor for the SDJAA who raises Angus with her family near Brandon, says these are positive things for the Angus breed in South Dakota. And, she points out, the skills juniors are developing by being involved in Angus activities go beyond just showing cattle.

South Dakota by the numbers

561 active American Angus Association members

157 junior Angus members

15,568 cattle registered in fiscal year (FY) 2003

5th-place ranking in registrations for 2003

She reports that South Dakota Angus juniors are starting to get more involved in both the regional and national junior shows and are participating in events such as quiz bowl, team sales, the mentoring program and the Auxiliary-sponsored All-American *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) Cook-Off.

"Some of our current juniors in the state are expressing interest in serving on regional and national junior boards as well," Rogen says. "We are seeing goals change among our juniors. In addition to showing cattle, they realize the importance of doing the extra activities, supporting one another and working together. And that returns to us in

the form of more well-rounded leaders for our state and ag industry."

South Dakota is trying to build fun activities and family entertainment into some of its Angus events. At the summer Angus show, cow Olympics and a watermelon feed are part of the festivities. At the South Dakota State Fair, the auxiliary hosts a picnic and social after the open Angus show.

Styles says they are also discussing adding something like a golf tournament to the annual Angus tour to give members another opportunity to meet one another outside of cattle settings.

Like association members in any state, these South Dakota Angus members admit that they face challenges of getting new people involved and hope these family-oriented events will create more of a cooperative spirit among members.

"Those that are involved are very involved, and you can always count on them," Kevin says. "The challenge is to get new people involved, excited and committed, and to keep the whole state working together for the future of the Angus breed."

These South Dakota Angus enthusiasts are optimistic that through the combination of fun, family-friendly youth activities, they'll ensure great things for the Angus breed in their state for years to come.



More efforts to promote Angus involvement

There's no denying that participating in livestock shows and events can be an expensive endeavor. Thus, the South Dakota Angus Association (SDAA), the auxiliary, and junior association work together through the year to raise funds to be used to defer costs or provide premiums to participants at Angus events.

Their largest fund-raiser is a semen auction hosted by the SDAA at the annual meeting and banquet each February. Breeders donate semen to the auction, and all proceeds go toward junior activities — to be used for premium money at the summer field day, stipends for South Dakota youth who attend regional and/or national Angus events, and to sponsor shirts for those who attend the events.

Additional support comes from the state auxiliary, which sponsors two \$500 scholarships annually and gives a rope halter to each participant at the summer Angus show. The Southeast Angus Association also provides a feed pan to all participants at the summer field day.

"We've been very fortunate to have such great support," says junior advisor Shally Rogen, Brandon. "All of these efforts help promote the Angus breed."

The South Dakota juniors are taking an active role in raising money for national junior Angus activities. They are currently holding a quilt raffle, with the drawing at the annual meeting and banquet in February 2005. All proceeds will go toward the 2005 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Denver, Colo.



► Members of the SDJAA are holding a quilt raffle with money raised from the fund-raiser to go toward next year's NJAS in Denver, Colo.

