



Up Front

► by **John Crouch**, executive vice president

Continuing the Angus Advance

The summer of 2004 will be remembered for many reasons. For many parts of the country, it seemed to be an endless nightmare as storms ravaged Florida and many other southern states. People from other areas experienced continued drought, while others experienced great relief with the advent of much-needed moisture, which provided an abundance of forage and grain.

Even though we have experienced minor ups and downs, the beef cattle industry is in the best of times in most areas of the country.

On the Angus front

Toward the end of summer, the 2004 National Angus Conference took place in Roanoke, Va., and the ensuing tour trekked the beautiful Shenandoah Valley. Proclaimed by many to be one of the best slates of speakers ever staged at an Angus event, the program covered a multitude of topics.

Wayne Purcell, eminent agricultural economist and marketing specialist from Virginia Tech, complimented the Association on its position relative to marketing from both a live-animal and end-product standpoint. With respect to supply and demand, the beef industry should be in a favorable position for the next few years.

These predictions were buoyed by prospects of returning to normal trade relations in export markets in the near future.

With increased consumer demand for high-quality beef, the future looks especially bright for marketing registered Angus seedstock to the commercial sector and, in turn, *Certified Angus Beef*[®] (CAB[®]) to consumers.

Standing in for Valerie Ragan, the assistant deputy administrator of Veterinary Services of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), was APHIS Animal Identification Coordinator Neil Hammerschmidt, who addressed the

group regarding issues surrounding the adoption of the National Animal Identification Program (NAIP). The vast expanse and diverse terrain of pastoral lands in the United States offer challenges for rapid implementation; however, at such time as these policies are adopted, your Association is positioned to participate.

Association staffers Bill Bowman and Sally Northcutt armed producers with information regarding the recently adopted suite of economic indexes. These presentations included examples of how producers can utilize \$Values for postweaning gain (\$F), carcass value (\$G) and total beef value (\$B). The newest of these exciting new tools is called "Weaned Calf Value" (\$W), which combines the birthing complex, weaning weight, maternal value and cow energy requirements.

Ronnie Green, leader for the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and former member of the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA), provided insight relative to mapping the bovine genome and application of DNA technology to the National Cattle Evaluation (NCE) process.

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REGIONAL MANAGERS—Refer to page 216.

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For a CAB staff listing, refer to page 74.

He emphasized that while the process is painstakingly slow and very expensive, DNA technology promises to provide much-needed insight into hard-to-measure traits such as reproduction, feed efficiency and disease resistance.

President of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) and an Angus breeder from Kansas, Jan Lyons called upon Angus breeders across the country to become involved in organizations that represent the cattle industry in the political process. With the total number of farmers and ranchers declining annually, it is imperative that our interests are represented at every level of government.

The conference program, "Continuing the Angus Advance," concluded with a marketing panel titled "Strength in Numbers," moderated by Scott Greiner, Virginia Tech. Panelists were Joe Hampton, Back Creek, Mount Ulla, N.C.; Harvey Lemmon, Lemmon Cattle Enterprises, Woodbury, Ga.; and Lydia Yon, Yon Family Farms, Ridge Spring, S.C. They presented ideas and policies that had enabled them to build successful marketing programs.

Angus by bus

Following the "sit-down" program, the group journeyed by bus to the beautiful campus of Virginia Tech, where we viewed an excellent set of cattle; had practical demonstrations on ultrasound technology, body condition scoring, estrus synchronization and embryo transfer; and were treated to a wonderful supper served by the Virginia Tech Block & Bridle Club.

A two-day tour followed. We were vividly made aware of just how strong the Angus advance has been manifested, through observation of outstanding herds of beautifully adapted, sound-uddered cattle on display at Maxey Farms, Chatham; Daltons on the Sycamore, Gretna; Knoll Crest Farm Inc., Red House; Sugar Loaf Farms, Staunton; Whitestone Farm, Aldie; Lazy Lane Farms Inc., Upperville; and Wehrmann Angus, New Market. A highlight of the three-day event was an address by Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, which was delivered at Whitestone Farm.

Early advances

The theme of the conference, "Continuing the Angus Advance," actually

began in the Highlands of Scotland in the 16th century. It continued in 1873 when the first Angus bulls were brought to America and further continued in 1883 with the formation of the American Angus Association — and it continues today.

There is tremendous equity in the name Angus. We continue advancing Angus equity each time a commercial producer has a good experience with an Angus bull or a set of Angus females. It continues when an Angus breeder has a good experience in the salering. Advancing Angus equity continues when consumers have a memorable dining experience with CAB. To paraphrase a comment by Association Regional Manager Chuck Grove, who acted as emcee for the conference, I have heard people comment that the most exciting time to be in the Angus business is today; I say the most exciting time to be in the Angus business will be tomorrow.


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