



Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

Relationships build lasting industry

Factories can build a product, but it is people who build an identity. And while consumers may experiment and try alternatives, they are generally loyal to the suppliers with whom they have built relationships.

People behind the product

When you buy feed or mineral, what determines the product that you'll buy? Is it the ingredients on the label? Is it proximity? Is it price? Is it the flavor preferences of your cows?

While all may factor in, I'll lay odds that your long-term choice depends on the people who sell you the feed and deliver it to your farm or ranch, and the service and counsel that they provide after the sale.

Without that kind of customer-supplier loyalty, the capitalistic system wouldn't work. Why? Because if business were always based on price, then we'd always buy from somebody selling below cost of production. That wouldn't build a sustainable system, because as you would buy, you'd be putting your supplier out of business — or paying taxes to support him by other means.

It's the willingness to work together to make each other successful that solidifies long-term customer-supplier relationships and allows for a system that is sustainable long-term. There's no doubt in my mind that is what has set the Association, its entities and their customers apart from the competition in the beef industry.

And it's the reason why an Association

mentality — focused on customer success — will outlast a traditional corporate mindset over time.

Angie takes a new role

Working to make her customers successful is a philosophy Angie Stump Denton exemplified while serving as director of the Angus Productions Inc. (API) Web Marketing Department. Angie left API in mid-October to pursue a position that will allow her to return to her home farm and spend more time with her husband, John, and their son, Wesley.

As General Manager Terry Cotton said, "There's people who come to work, and there's people who make a difference. You've made a difference."

Angie, you've made such a difference here at API — both to the organization and to customers. Whether trying to get a customer's Web site to look just so, looking after your customers' interests in providing Web products or working tirelessly with editorial to make the real-time sites a reality, you've embodied the concept of a customer-driven service provider.

Thanks for your dedication, your love for the industry and its people, your enthusiasm and your friendship. You've left mighty big shoes to fill, but more importantly, you've left an imprint on the lives of the people you worked with here at Angus.

We wish you success and happiness as you begin your new role as editor of the *Hereford World*. May our paths cross till the end of time.

E-MAIL: shermel@angusjournal.com

ANGUS PRODUCTIONS INC.

3201 Frederick Ave., Saint Joseph, MO 64506; 1-800-821-5478; fax: (816) 233-6575; office hours: (M-F) 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (Central)

home page: www.angusjournal.com

Staff are listed by name, phone extension and e-mail prefix. All direct phone numbers are "(816) 383-5..."; all e-mail addresses are "...@angusjournal.com"

General manager— Terry Cotton, 214, tcotton

Editorial Department — Editor, *Shauna Rose Hermel*, 270, shermel ■ Associate editor, *Corinne Patterson*, 277, cpatterson ■ Assistant editors, *Crystal Albers*, 215, calbers, & *Brooke Byrd*, 244, bbyrd ■ Artists, *Christy Benigno* & *Mary Black*

Field editors — *Kindra Gordon*, 609 Deerfield Court, Spearfish, SD 57783, (605) 722-7699, kindras@gordonresources.com ■ *Janet Mayer*, 259 Mile Hill Rd., Johnstown, PA 15909, (814) 322-4687, jmayer5013@aol.com ■ *Becky Mills*, Rt. 1, Box 414, Cuthbert, GA 31740, (229) 732-6748, lovettmills@alltel.net ■ *Troy Smith*, HC 72, Box 18A, Sargent, NE 68874, (308) 527-3483, wordsmith@nctc.net

Contributing writers — *Alaina Burt*, *Jason Jenkins* & *Forrest Rose*

Advertising/Production Department — Manager, *Cheryl Oxley*, 216, coxley ■ Advertising coordinators, *Doneta Brown*, 289, dbrown, & *Rich Masoner*, 223, rmasoner ■ Production assistant, *Carol Beckett*, 226, cbeckett ■ Advertising artists, *Tim Blumer*, *Mike Bush* & *Monica Ford* ■ Advertising proofreader, *Jacque McGinness*

Special Services Department — Coordinator, *Sharon Mayes*, 221, smayes ■ Assistant, *Vickie Whitsell* ■ Artists, *Susan Bomar* & *Janet Herkelman* ■ Proofreader, *Linda Robbins*

Web Marketing Department — Director, *Angie Stump Denton*, 211, adenton ■ Assistants, *Annie Jensen*, 239, ajensen, & *Melanie Thurnau*, 234, mthurnau ■ Artists, *Tim Blumer* & *Ray Palermo*

Photo Department — Coordinator, *Tanya Peebles*, 217, tpeebles ■ Digital imaging specialist, *Kathrin Gresham*

Circulation coordinator — *LaVera Spire*, 220, lspire

Network systems coordinator — *Bruce Buntin*

Office assistant — *Lauralee West*

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Online insights

Don't miss the online coverage of the 2004 National Angus Conference and Tour and the accompanying topic Web site on body condition scoring. Coverage is provided by the Angus Productions Inc. (API) Web and editorial teams. The sites are made possible through the sponsorship of AgriLabs and Purina.

Visit www.nationalangusconference.com and www.cowbcs.info.

