



# Up Front

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

## Winter thoughts

*December is a wonderful time of year. It marks the winter solstice, that time at the beginning of winter when we observe the shortest day in the year. Winter solstice has been celebrated in cultures around the world for thousands of years. This start of the solar year is a celebration of light and the rebirth of the sun.*

### Angus celebrations

Winter solstice — also known as Yule, Christmas and various other names — celebrates the beginning of a new solar year and new life. It is a time for reflection, a time of peace and a time of tranquility.

The Yule season is a very spiritual time of year, a time when those of us who approach middle age nostalgically are reminded of childhoods filled with snow and mistletoe, stockings and hard candy, and hearth and warmth generated from an open fire. It reminds us of a gentle time when the important things in life revolved around family time and warm relationships.

As we observe Christmas and its true meaning, let us also reflect on just how fortunate we are in many things. To name a few, the United States of America, with all of her problems and growing pains, is still, without question, a wonderful and safe place

to live. We live in a democratic society and have the inalienable right to vote and elect leaders of our choice from local to national levels. We can choose our religious affiliations without fear of reprisal.

We are blessed that we are part of rural America. We are people of the land, and for the most part can raise our families in concert with nature. We can feel proud that we are making a contribution to the nutritional state of mankind through the production of life-sustaining food.

### Great year for business

We can profess our thanks for the extraordinary year the Angus industry has enjoyed. From a business standpoint, your Association has experienced one of its best years in history. Our number of annual registrations reached levels similar to those of the mid-1970s; however, registration activity

was decelerating then instead of accelerating as it is today.

Your Association observed a 6% increase in the number of new animals recorded in the herd book, a 9.5% increase in transfers of registered Angus animals to new owners, and a more than 12% increase in new members joining the Association.

Increases were also posted in Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) activity, resulting in part from a 2% increase in herds participating in the program.

Angus breeders can also be grateful for the results of an independent survey of stockmen that revealed 68.6% of respondents indicated they were using Angus bulls. With this in mind, it is therefore no surprise that in excess of 35,000 Angus bulls, in sales reported to the *Angus Journal* last year, commanded an average sale price of \$2,707 for a phenomenal increase of \$466 per head. So in essence, more bulls sold for more money — that's demand in its purest form.

We end the year with thanksgiving and enter the new year with much excitement. We know if we all approach the future with resolute determination to maintain our focus on constructing and using tools that improve bottom-line economics for commercial beef producers and enhance consumer acceptance of beef, our Association and breed will continue in the vein of success.

Please accept our best wishes for a pleasant holiday season.

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**REGIONAL MANAGERS—Refer to page 164.**

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For a CAB staff listing, refer to page 72.