

NJAA Selects Ambassador

Lauren Adcock, Illinois, was selected to represent the National Junior Angus Association worldwide as the NJAA's first-ever Angus Ambassador.

by *Carrie Heitman, American Angus Association*

The National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) is fortunate to involve hundreds of outstanding youth leaders in the Angus industry. For the first time, this year the NJAA selected one junior member to represent the organization at cattle events and meetings throughout the United States and Canada. The winner — Lauren Adcock, Moweaqua, Ill. — is thrilled to begin her duties as the Angus Ambassador.

“The Ambassador program will give me the opportunity to bring together the junior and the adult organizations as one, and become a stronger front as an Association to educate the public about the Angus breed,” says Adcock, a senior at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she studies agriculture and consumer economics.

She gained an appreciation for agriculture through her family's operation, Adcock Land and Livestock, which has raised Angus and Simmental seedstock since 1972. She continues to play an active role in the business. Adcock also currently serves as president of the Illinois Junior Angus Association and is a past Illinois Angus Queen.

When asked why she wanted to become the Angus Ambassador, Adcock says she wants to inform others about the benefits of using Angus genetics and how production agriculture feeds the world. During an internship this summer at Farm Credit Services of Mid-America in Vincennes, Ind.,

she was able to deepen her industry knowledge and educate herself on how to better communicate agriculture's positive message with others.

“Growing up in agriculture, especially in the Angus industry, you are forced at a young age to take life by the reins and take responsibility for something other than yourself, every day, morning and night,” Adcock says. “I attribute all the skills I have developed to the Angus breed, and becoming the Ambassador is the best experience that will ever be given to me.”

It is a title that did not come easily. Seven applications were received, and the top five applicants were invited to the American Angus Association in Saint Joseph, Mo. On Aug. 21, the finalists, accompanied by their families, toured the Association and gave a 15-minute presentation addressing current beef industry challenges. Topics ranged from the historic drought to genetic technology and from beef advocacy to forage management.

Also competing in the top five were Esther McCabe, Elk City, Kan.; Tyler Ottensmeier, McLouth, Kan.; Hannah Wright, Spring City, Tenn.; and Blaine Novak, Fordville, N.D.

“I am always impressed by the caliber of youth in the Angus community,” says Robin Ruff, Association director of junior activities. “All of our Ambassador candidates are well-spoken, confident representatives for our industry. They have bright futures ahead of them.”

The panel of judges



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evaluating the finalists was also impressed with their industry knowledge and enthusiasm.

“Before we met the finalists, we reviewed their résumés and cover letters, and it was neat to finally meet them and [to] know we had five finalists who could walk in off the street and talk to strangers about the beef industry,” says Wes Tiemann, Association regional manager and competition judge.

Joining Tiemann as judges were Larry Corah, vice president of Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB); Sally Northcutt, Association genetic research director; Becky Hays of the National Centralized Ultrasound

Processing (CUP) lab; and Chris Sankey, Association Board member.

Adcock begins a yearlong term as the Angus Ambassador, traveling to events such as the National Angus Conference & Tour in Wichita, Kan.; a *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) Building Blocks Seminar in Wooster, Ohio; the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) annual symposium in Oklahoma City, Okla.; the Cattle Industry Annual Convention in Tampa Bay, Fla.; and the Guiding Outstanding Angus Leaders (GOAL) Conference in Canada.

Funding for Adcock's travel expenses and registration fees are provided by the Angus Foundation, thanks to the generous donations it receives from Angus breeders and friends.

“Investing in Angus youth has always been a high priority of the Angus Foundation, and the new Angus Ambassador Program is just another wonderful example of how we use unrestricted charitable gifts from our generous Angus breeders, allied industry interests and friends,” says Milford Jenkins, Angus Foundation president.



Editor's Note: Carrie Heitman is communications coordinator for the American Angus Association.



▶ Competing for the title of Angus Ambassador in the top five were (from left) Tyler Ottensmeier, McLouth, Kan.; Hannah Wright, Spring City, Tenn.; Esther McCabe, Elk City, Kan.; Lauren Adcock, Moweaqua, Ill.; and Blaine Novak, Fordville, N.D.