

Angus Ambassador

Youth member selected to represent American Angus Association nationwide.

Story & photo by *Kelli Fulkerson*

As consumers become more interested in knowing where and how their food was raised, it is vital that the livestock industry keeps sharing its story. Robin Ruff, American Angus Association director of junior activities, says most consumers don't want to hear the scientific reasoning behind why feeding cattle in a feedlot is logical. They want to hear stories, personal experiences and memories from the people who are doing the work to produce the product. This offers the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) a perfect opportunity to get members involved.

Committed to preparing youth for the future, the 2011-2012 NJAA Board of Directors developed the idea to begin an ambassador program.

For the first time, this year one fortunate NJAA member will have the opportunity to jump-start her networking in the cattle business and to represent the Angus breed through the NJAA Ambassador Program.

"It's important for juniors to have the opportunity to be involved in the Angus business and cattle industry," says Ruff. "This program creates that opportunity by giving them a well-rounded experience within the Angus world."

Selection process

Candidates had to be members between the ages of 17 and 21. To apply they submitted a cover letter, résumé and two essay responses. Judges then selected five finalists, who were invited to American Angus Association headquarters in Saint Joseph, Mo., to conduct a 12- to 15-minute presentation about an issue in today's beef industry.

Competing in the top five were Lauren Adcock, Moweaqua, Ill.; Esther McCabe, Elk City, Kan.; Blaine Novak, Fordville, N.D.; Tyler Ottensmeier, McLouth, Kan.; and Hannah Wright, Spring City, Tenn.

"Before we met the finalists, we reviewed their résumés, cover letters and essay responses. It was neat to finally meet them, and 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 Lab (CUP lab); and Chris Sankey, Association director.

The chosen one

Adcock was this year's winner. Lauren, daughter of Robert and Sherry Adcock, has been an NJAA member since 2000. She is also a member of the Illinois Junior Angus Association (IJAA), of which she currently serves as president. She also served as the 2011 Illinois Angus queen and was an Illinois candidate for the NJAA Board. She has been active showing cattle at the state, regional and national levels.

When asked during the competition what she hoped to accomplish during her year as the ambassador, Adcock replied, "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.

"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 said. "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."

Adcock's family has been in the Angus business since 1972. She wowed the judges with her deep industry knowledge while presenting, "2012 Drought Challenges of the Beef Industry." She discussed how she personally has faced drought challenges this year on her family farm and through her summer internship at Farm Credit Mid-America as a financial services officer intern.

"The drought isn't just a drought," said Adcock. "It affects everything — inventory numbers, feed and input costs, health, body condition, reproductive consequences, all the way to mortality rates, nitrate poisoning and mineral deficiencies."

Adcock is currently a senior at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign studying agriculture and consumer economics.

Places to see the ambassador

Adcock will travel to important industry events, including an orientation at Association headquarters; the National

Angus Conference & Tour in Wichita, Kan.; a *Certified Angus Beef®* Building Blocks Seminar in Wooster, Ohio; the Cattle Industry Annual Convention and National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Trade Show in Tampa, Fla.; and the Guiding Outstanding Angus Leaders Conference in Canada. Her individual schedule and availability will determine other travel options.

"I am thrilled to have such a smart, mature

knowledgeable representative for our membership," says Ruff. "If you see her at these events, please feel free to reach out to her."

Funding for Adcock's travel expenses and registration fees is 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.

"I encourage all members to get involved as much as they can," says Adcock. "Contact your state association to see what events are happening in your area. Always remember to never give up."

For more information about the NJAA or the NJAA Ambassador Program, contact Ruff at 816-383-5100 or visit www.angus.org/NJAA.



Lauren Adcock