



# Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

## Nutrition is the foundation

*We often talk about how systems are only as strong as their weakest link. While that analogy can emphasize the importance of a complete program, it should not overshadow the importance of starting with a strong foundation. When it comes to the cow herd, that foundation is nutrition.*

### Nutrition theme

From our readership survey last winter, it's clear you recognize the importance of nutrition to your seedstock program. You ranked herd management, including nutrition, and genetics as the top two subjects in which you are interested and on which you would like to see more information in the *Angus Journal*. With that in mind, we chose nutrition as the theme of this January issue.

Whether we talk about cattle health, fertility, success of a vaccination program, animal welfare or progeny performance, nutrition always comes up as one of the — if not *the* — foundations for success. From the time an animal is conceived, its nutritional environment will dictate its health, performance and reproductive ability.

Matt Hersom, associate professor in animal science at the University of Florida, provides our “foundation” article, laying out the basics of cow nutrition, beginning on page 56. From daily intake guidelines for feed and water to nutrient requirement breakdowns by cow weight and milking ability, Hersom provides a good overview of what a cow's needs are and some factors to consider in meeting those requirements.

Toxins in the feedstuff can undermine

your efforts to provide a good nutrition program. Mycotoxins are a concern in corn and silage harvested in 2013, according to Alltech's 2013 North American harvest analysis (see page 122). Endophyte-infested tall fescue is an annual concern, but there are management considerations to limit its ill effects (see page 126).

While more rain in many areas during the spring and summer added to the tonnage of hay harvested, it also delayed harvest, causing maturity problems, and made it hard to get the forage harvested without rain damage. Both can reduce the quality of the hay being fed. On page 129, the University of Tennessee's James Neel offers a reminder that winters are hard on cattle that are underfed, and that bale you take out to the cows may not have the punch you think it has. Testing hay quality to know what you have and strategically feeding the hay based on its quality to different management groups in your herd are good strategies.

Neel also reminds that hay is not cheap



and waste multiplies that cost — as much as 30%. Hay feeders can help minimize the waste (see page 132).

Columnist Bob Larson looks at mineral supplementation in this month's “Vet Call” (see page 134) while Rick Rasby considers the needs and intake limitations of those first-calf females in “Ridin' Herd” (see page 138). Our Angus advisors always include nutrition among their monthly management tips, but I'll draw attention to Justin Sexten's focus this month on winter supplement timing options (see page 142).

Several of the speakers at the 2013 Range Beef Cow Symposium in Rapid City, S.D., focused on aspects of nutrition. We included synopses of four of those speakers' presentations in this issue (see page 188). From the University of Nebraska, Karla Jenkins discussed limit-feeding cows in confinement using crop residues and Rick Funston spoke on fetal programming.

South Dakota State University's Amanda Blair explained how cow nutrition affects progeny carcass traits and meat characteristics. Scott Lake of the University of Wyoming spoke of the importance of maintaining good nutrition after breeding to the success of an artificial insemination (AI) program.

You can get more details on these presentations and others at the RBCS XXIII at [www.rangebeefcow.com](http://www.rangebeefcow.com), the *Angus Journal's* event coverage site. We've posted proceedings, PowerPoints and audio, along with the summaries, in the site newsroom.

We hope you find this series of articles extremely useful.

Happy New Year!

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## Angus Journal

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