



Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

Long-range forecast

As I write this column, we've just had a major thawing day. This winter, that is an extraordinarily welcome event. It is amazing how much snow we can lose in one day.

Changing weather pattern

One of the most welcome tidbits of information I gleaned from the Cattle Industry Convention in Denver this February was the prediction by Art Douglas that we'd have one more arctic blast (happened last week) and then the jet stream would move, keeping that cold air up in Canada for the remainder of the spring.

For this Missouri girl who loves summer, that's welcome news. I thought I moved out of the deep freeze of Minnesota.

I recall deeper snowfalls occurring when I was a child than we've had here lately. My brother and I used to make some pretty good snow tunnels when we were kids. For the last 20 years we haven't had that much snow — until this year.

I'm sort of relieved to know it's not a perception thing — you know, like the fact that your aunt's living room seemed much bigger when you were kids than it does now. I'm quite relieved to hear Mr. Douglas explain that it is a real phenomenon — and not just that it would take more snow since we are bigger kids now.

But Douglas's weather prediction in the Cattle-Fax Outlook Seminar said we are in a

weather pattern more similar to the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s than to anything after 1980. He displayed a sequence of maps showing the snow cover has gotten deeper and that it has plunged farther south for the last five years. So much for global warming.

In fact, based on several indicators, including sun spots, sea surface temperatures and certain winds, Douglas indicated we were more likely to be entering a mini ice age than to feel effects of global warming.

The weather pattern we are in now, caused by cold water along the Pacific equator, is called La Niña. Douglas said it is the strongest La Niña on record since 1917-1918 and, chances are, we'll experience the ramifications of La Niña throughout 2011 until the return of El Niño, most likely in 2012.

Besides the cold air mass staying north, in the next six months, Douglas predicted U.S. weather highlights will also include:

- Deepening snow packs in the Northern and Central Rockies;
- Slower snowmelt in the Pacific Northwest due to a cooler spring;
- Normal to slightly above normal precipitation in the Northwest;
- Good feedlot weather from the southern

half of Kansas south into the Panhandle as the storm track stays north;

- Poor growing conditions due to dryness in the winter wheat areas of the Plains;
- Extended grazing in California due to cool spring temperatures, though it will be drier than normal;
- Drought in the Southwest and South will edge northward into the western half of the Midwest this spring;
- A warm, dry summer in the Midwest if La Niña continues through summer;
- Hot, dry weather could be a concern across the South, Texas and Central Plains.

The weather can always change, and when La Niña gives way to El Niño will definitely affect the accuracy of the forecast.

Hot topics

Douglas's presentation was one of many hot topics discussed at the Cattle Industry Convention. The markets, government regulation, the Eastern bankruptcy, animal traceability, consumer demand, and a new industry long-range plan, among others, were also hot topics. Within this issue, we bring you some of the highlights of this annual meeting, but it is only part of the coverage that we did.

This meeting is one of the meetings for which we provide online coverage. Visit the newsroom at www.4cattlemen.com to access our complete coverage along with news releases from the organizations participating in the event. Also visit www.angus.org for video coverage of the event provided by the American Angus Association.

E-MAIL: shermel@angusjournal.com
www.api-virtuallibrary.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"

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