



Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

Prepping to be a spokesman

Times are changing. In the not-so-old days, it used to take training and company approval to become a company spokesperson. In today's social media network, it just takes access to the Internet.

Access means responsibility

For instance, a teen unhappy with the burger he or she purchased can become your Twitter brand critique for the day. Or an animal rights group with an anti-farming agenda can convince followers of the atrocities they need to bring to light through any means possible.

When I see the photo used by animal rights campaigns of the sow biting the bar of her crate, I'm reminded of the years we raised pigs at home. Granted, we weren't total confinement, but we did farrow in crates. Those pictures reminded me an awful lot of feeding time and sows that were pretty darn happy to see me — or at least the feed bucket. I think a lot of activists would marvel at how a sow, when it came time to farrow, would want to go to the farrowing house and would walk straight to the crate she had the last time to claim it as hers.

Without the context, you know little about a situation, and we all know the dangers of rushing to conclusions without the facts.

So, let's put the shoe on the other foot. The buzz for agriculture right now is ag advocacy — getting our stories out through

social media to let people know our side of the story. It is so important that we do this. We have the experience of the human-animal interaction and can provide a unique story to the conversation. There are great examples of top-notch blogs, Facebook pages and Twitter tweets.

To best advocate for agriculture, you need a game plan and posts should be thought out. Provide substance, not hype; information, not rhetoric. Be ready to substantiate your claims.

I commend Cari Rincker and those who assisted her (including the Association's Crystal Young) in putting together the how-to guides that are featured on page 112 of this issue.

Important reminders

► As we near the deadline for nominating delegates to serve at the Annual Convention of Delegates this fall, it is especially important to pay your dues on time so your name can be placed on the ballot if you are nominated. Membership status of delegate nominees will be determined July 1 prior to printing the state ballots. Only those whose membership status is current can be placed on the ballot.

Membership status will again be checked prior to the Convention, and only those with a current membership can be seated as delegates. So, don't let your membership expire!

► The 2011 Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) meeting is just around the corner. This year's meeting will be June 1-4 in Bozeman, Mont. Thanks to sponsorship of BioZyme Inc. through its major contribution to the Angus Foundation, Angus Productions Inc. (API) will again provide online coverage of the event at www.bifconference.com. Visit the site now for a schedule and links to registration. After the conference, visit the newsroom for summaries of the sessions, photo galleries of the tours, announcement of the award winners and audio and speaker PowerPoint presentations as available.

► At press time, the American Angus Association and Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI) announced expansion of the breed's offering of genomic-enhanced expected progeny differences (EPDs). The High Density 50K (HD 50K) platform from Pfizer Animal Genetics will be incorporated into genomic-enhanced EPDs for growth traits, including birth, weaning and yearling weight EPDs; as well as milk EPDs.

Through the American Angus Association, AGI now offers genomic-enhanced EPDs for carcass, growth and residual average daily gain (RADG) traits incorporating genomic data from both Pfizer Animal Genetics and the Igenity® Profile for Angus. A genomic-enhanced EPD for docility incorporating Igenity results is also available. For more information, visit www.angus.org.

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