

Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

What does it take to be enduring?

The theme of this year's National Angus Conference & Tour, "Come Home to Kansas," gives us a chance to look back at some of the history of the Angus breed in America. It certainly has endured well the test of time.

Off to a good start

When those first four Angus bulls walked off the steamship *Alabama* in 1873, setting foot in New Orleans before being pushed north to the Kansas prairie, most would have considered them a fad — little more than some gentleman's fancy. But George Grant crossed the hornless black oddities with the Longhorn cows that grazed his Victoria, Kan., ranch. The resulting calf crop was uniform in color and in conformation. And he continued the breeding program.

"In driving through a herd of 800 head, it was singularly remarkable to see red, dun and even light mixed-colored cows, with the calves jet black, hornless and otherwise so perfectly resembling the sire," noted a visitor to the ranch. "This is a most favorable recommendation of their blood."

The bulls proved to be hardy, surviving winters on the open range. The calves thrived and found favor with feedlots because of their rapid gain and premium sale prices.

I find it ironic that an analysis of the active members of the American Angus Association indicates the average membership to be five years. That's about



the length of time George Grant had to make his mark on the cattle industry in America before he died in 1878.

She'll survive us all

We joke and say the Angus cow will survive us all. After all, she's survived drought; flood; heat; frigid cold; the show circuit; the Board; the staff; and breeding programs of all types, sizes and philosophies. While we jest, it is the traits that opened the hearts of cattlemen to the hornless beefy black bloodlines that have helped the breed endure in this country for 139 years. The breed delivered health and performance, productivity, ease of management,

performance in the feedlot, premiums on the rail and consumer preference — uniformly and consistently. It did then, and it does now.

Those traits have endured because they bring value to every segment in the chain.

As we head to Kansas for this year's event, we will see how those enduring qualities have helped families prosper on the ranch for generations. It will be a treat to visit these operations and talk to them about how they have succeeded in making an enduring mark on the beef industry with Angus cattle.

Look for the "Come Home to Kansas" insert in this edition of the *Angus Journal*, and visit our event coverage site — www.NationalAngusConference.com — to learn more about the event, which will be hosted by both the American Angus Association and the Kansas Angus Association, with sponsorship support by Land O' Lakes Purina Feed LLC. I think you'll enjoy the historical background we added to the website under a tab called "About the Theme."

Mark your calendars to attend this Oct. 3-5 event, and don't forget to register by Aug. 20 to get the \$150 registration fee.

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