



Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

Putting the puzzle together

This summer has been an incredibly busy one. As the stakes get higher, with so many issues facing agriculture, there seem to be more and more meetings to discuss those issues. That's a good thing. We don't find solutions by hiding our heads in the sand and hoping problems will move by, leaving us unaffected.

The big picture

Solutions often come in the midst of discussion. Different perspectives bring different pieces to the puzzle. The more pieces we have, the more likely we are to see the big picture, and that makes fitting the pieces together easier.

If we're lucky, someone or another group may have been looking at the situation from a different angle, and may already have pieced together a section of the puzzle. Sharing efforts can bring about one of those aha moments — a big leap forward in completing the puzzle.

I think the founders of the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) knew that. Breeders, academia, industry and associations have worked hand-in-hand since the organization's beginning to tackle some of the puzzles seedstock breeders face.

The annual research symposium is not a meeting for everyone. It's technical. It's futuristic. Some of the subjects can be a little intimidating. But it is where producers interact with the scientists and

associations to combine perspectives.

I think most cattlemen would agree they depend on the scientists to formulate the next genetic prediction model and ways to predict feed efficiency or fertility. And they depend on the associations and industry affiliates to build the programs and services to bring the technology to light. But if producers won't put it into practice, there is no use for scientific discovery.

BIF provides a place for cattlemen and breed associations to question the scientists and offer up the puzzles they need solutions to. It offers the scientists a forum to introduce and refine tools to bring ideas to reality. In doing so, it creates efficiencies, allowing us to put those big blocks of the puzzle together. And every once in a while, we get an aha moment.

Of course, success requires checking egos at the door, cooperating and sharing our respective corners of the puzzle.

The question was posed to me at this year's meeting: Why does Angus really need to participate in BIF? My answer: Because we

don't have all the pieces of the puzzle and because we owe it to our customers to do our part to provide the big picture.

Event coverage

BIF participants gathered in Columbia, Mo., July 28-July 1 for "Gateway to Profit," the organization's 2010 research symposium and annual meeting. In this issue, we are highlighting those recognized by BIF for their excellence and contributions to the organization and the beef cattle industry.

Congratulations to Downey Ranch Inc., Wamego, Kan., for being selected Commercial Producer of the Year (see page 209).

Now don't get after me for printing highlights of a Hereford breeder winning the seedstock honor. They didn't get there by accident, and if we fail to recognize excellence among our peers in the seedstock industry ... well, we might as well put the puzzle back in the box.

Several Angus folks are among the winners of the organization's other awards. You can read the highlights on page 209-218. Congratulations to Brian McCulloh, Woodhill Farms, Viroqua, Wis., who stepped down as BIF president, and to Ben Eggers, Sydenstricker Genetics, Mexico, Mo., who took the reins as president.

We'll bring you highlights of the research symposium in the September issue, but you can go online now at www.bifconference.com to access summaries of the speakers, along with the proceedings, PowerPoints and audio of the sessions.

E-MAIL: shermel@angusjournal.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"

General manager — Terry Cotton, 214, tcotton

Editorial Department — Editor, *Shauna Rose Hermel*, 270, shermel ■ Assistant editors, *Mathew Elliott*, 277, mellio; & *Linda Robbins*, 245, lrobbins ■ Artists, *Mary Black* & *Craig Simmons*

Field editors — *Barb Baylor Anderson*, 305 Valley View Dr., Edwardsville, IL 62025, 618-656-0870, anderagcom@sbcglobal.net ■ *Kindra Gordon*, 11734 Weisman Rd., Whitewood, SD 57793, 605-722-7699, kindras@gordonresources.com ■ *Ed Haag*, 317 W. 16th, Spokane, WA 99203, 509-747-2908, agscribe@aol.com ■ *Becky Mills*, Rt. 1, Box 414, Cuthbert, GA 31740, 229-732-6748, lovettmills@windstream.net ■ *Troy Smith*, 44431 Sargent River Rd., Sargent, NE 68874, 308-527-3483, wordsmith@nctc.net

Publications and Production — Manager, LaVera Spire, 220, lspirer ■

Advertising coordinators, *Annie Cluck*, 223, acluck; & *Karri Mildenerger*, 289, kmildenerger ■ Production coordinator, *Carol Beckett*, 203, 226, cbeckett ■ Advertising artists, *Mike Bush* & *Monica Ford* ■ Proofreader coordinator, *Jacque McGinness*

Circulation & billing manager — *LaVera Spire*, 220, lspirer

Special Services Department — Coordinator, *Sharon Mayes*, 221, smayes ■ Assistants, *Julie Tylicki* & *Vickie Whitsell* ■ Artists, *Susan Bomar* & *Bradley Redmond* ■ Proofreader, *Melinda Cordell*

Web Services Department — Manager & sales coordinator, *Rich Masoner*, 239, rmasoner ■ Coordinators, *Doneta Brown*, 232, dbrown; & *Sara Reardon*, 212, sreardon ■ Web developers, *Tim Blumer* & *Thuy Copeland*

Photo Department — Photo services coordinator, *Kathrin Breytenbach* ■ Photo services assistant, *Colette Weipert*

Network systems coordinator — *Bruce Buntin*

Board of Directors — *Joe Hampton*, chairman; *Bryce Schumann*, vice chairman; *Terry Cotton*, president; *Richard Wilson*, secretary-treasurer; *Chad Hoffman*; *Jim Rentz*; *Darrell Silveira*; *Gordon Stucky*; *Philip Trowbridge* & *Cathy Watkins*

