



Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

Commitment to excellence

For several years now we have focused our October issue on a commitment to excellence, highlighting those cattlemen honored at the Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) annual conference for their dedication to the brand. It is amazing to see the numbers that these individuals achieve in terms of percent of cattle reaching the brand target.

Amazing, but not surprising

While their accomplishments are amazing, they should not be a surprise. As a breed, you've worked long and hard to build a toolbox that is unmatched in this industry in its ability to characterize what we have, to select for directional change and to position ourselves for the future. While the CAB brand is definitely one of those targets, there are many others.

Undoubtedly, the database is the first essential tool. Having an ancestral pedigree that extends a century gives us the framework for comparison and future planning. The data you have collected and supplied for comparison has been analyzed philosophically and scientifically, up one side and down the other, to come up with in-herd ratios, estimated breeding values (EBVs), expected progeny differences (EPDs) and dollar value indexes (\$Values). Each advancement has helped add certainty to breeding decisions, saving you and your customers time and money.

Without doubt, there are naysayers who would undermine the accuracies of these tools, but the fact is, they have proven themselves over time. The respect the Angus database has in the scientific community is

unmatched, adding opportunity and value to every animal upon which you order a registration certificate. That database has helped put you in the driver's seat when it comes to DNA technology. You have the database that can validate the DNA markers.

With the finding of the developmental duplication (DD) genetic condition, it may be a little hard to accept that DNA saves you money, but consider the alternative. Back in the good old days of dwarfism in the 1950s, whole lines of cattle were eliminated because we couldn't distinguish a carrier from a noncarrier. Years of breeding were lost and diversity in the genetic makeup of the breed was sacrificed due to culling of bloodlines.

Today, we can test and make informed decisions. We can prevent the propagation of genetic conditions that have a negative impact in our herds and, more importantly, the herds of our commercial customers who trust us to provide the seedstock on which they rest their economic futures.

Because we are scrutinized heavily, we are likely to discover more of the problems that reside in our genetics and sooner. That's a positive, not a negative. As long as we accurately characterize our cattle and back them with a registration paper, our customers

can put trust in the genetics, knowing what they have and managing them accordingly.

We can use other tools in the toolbox — AngusSource®, AAA Login, MaternalPlus®, Angus Information Management Software (AIMS) and our information vehicles — to document the value of our genetics and provide confidence in purchasing decisions.

Committing to the future

Long-term success isn't achieved by what you have now. Some of the tools that will keep us at the top have not yet been envisioned.

Throughout the pages of this issue you will note the importance of research and the precarious position of its funding. Perhaps one of the greatest unsung tools in your Angus toolbox is the Angus Foundation's mission to fund and support research.

Current projects being funded through the Angus Foundation include:

- a University of Missouri research effort to sequence the whole genome of several Angus sires;
- a study on beef cow biological efficiency being conducted by North Carolina State University and the University of Illinois; and
- a University of Georgia study on the development of genetic evaluation methodology for traits of economic importance in Angus cattle.

You can find the current list of projects, as well as past projects, on the Foundation's website, www.angusfoundation.org. It's important to our future to keep this list growing, which means a financial commitment from you designated to research. Please take a moment to go to the website and see how you can invest in your future through the Angus Foundation.

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