



Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

A year plus one

It took us an extra month to cover our “35 Keys to Success” theme celebrating 35 years as a publication owned by the American Angus Association. We hope you have enjoyed it as much as we have enjoyed supporting it with stories central to your success as members of the American Angus Association. Fittingly, this month we wrap up with the key of “Being a Good Neighbor.”

Building trust

It's sort of like what appetite is to yearling weight. Being neighborly may not seem to have a direct effect on an individual operation's success, but, in the end, the growth of your seedstock operation and our beef industry as a whole are tied to how neighborly our customers, our competitors and our antagonists recognize us to be.

Short term there are ways to get around low appetite. We can increase nutrient density. We can minimize calorie exertion. In the end, if a steer doesn't eat, he doesn't grow.

In the seedstock business, we can focus on the product. We can change locations or markets. We might even promote our way into favor ... at least once. Customers may buy a novelty, but long-term sustainable growth in the seedstock business depends on building a reputation of trust and dependability.

It's important to realize that doesn't just mean trust in the product; it means trust in you. Will you stand behind your product? Will you be there in your customer's time of need? Will your reputation help further your customer's reputation and the reputation of his or her cattle?

Extend that to your consumer customer and the questions still relate to being neighborly. Can they trust you to provide a safe, wholesome food source for their families? Will you take care of the environment in which we all live? Can they trust you to take care of the welfare of the animals you raise?

We can't afford to take the attitude that consumers will appreciate us and our technological advances when they are hungry, or that our customers will buy a bull from us when they want a good one.

Revisiting the keys

From “Getting Started” to “Genetics” to “Being a Good Neighbor,” we've covered the gamut this past year, beginning with the August 2014 issue and now ending with the August 2015 issue. We've published hundreds of stories sharing different aspects of the 35 Keys to Success that you helped define through your participation in our readership surveys.

The articles written to support the 35 keys are a valuable resource that will stand the test of time. We've grouped them in one location, www.api-virtuallibrary.com/35keys/index.html, in the *Angus Journal* Virtual Library so you can review them at will.

While the theme has run its course, our coverage of material that is central to your success has not. It's part of our mission to be an indispensable partner to the beef industry, providing leading-edge information and marketing strategies through a unique range of print and digital platforms. Keep us on course with your feedback. We welcome your letters, whether by email or snail mail.

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