



Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

It's a big, big world

Of all the take-homes of the Angus Means Business National Convention & Trade Show, I consider the most important to be the diversity of needs of our members.

Broader view

When Todd and I travel, we prefer to drive. While it gives us time together, it also gives us an on-the-ground view of the terrain from point A to point B, as well as conversations with people along the way. For Todd, that equates to whether he agrees with current estimates of the soybean and corn crops, which affects selling decisions for the family farm. It's a more-informed view of the market than looking out your back door and talking to your neighbor.

Getting away from home and conversing with cattlemen from other areas of the country who deal with a different set of advantages and a different set of challenges can do the same thing. Forage resources, herd regulations, climate, customer profiles, access to labor, environmental and consumer sensitivities, and even predators differ from one part of the country to another.

To make decisions as a national organization, it's imperative that those making the decisions have a good grasp of

the depth and breadth of the issues facing the membership — in its entirety. The convention certainly provided the forum to do just that with a super educational program and plenty of opportunities to visit with fellow members from all across the country.

We can't replace the hallway conversations, but we can share highlights of the educational program. Visit <http://angusjournal.com/NCnTS/2015/index.html> for Angus Media's coverage of the event online.

At the buzzer

Nov. 11, as we were wrapping up this issue, the American Angus Association and its Board of Directors recognized a genetic condition that has been observed in the Simmental population among cattle with Angus ancestry. Jonathan Beever at the University of Illinois says the condition, called *Oculocutaneous hypopigmentation* (OH), is inherited as a simple recessive.

It does not appear to be to be a significant

factor in the Angus population, as the screening of 1,311 Angus sires for Beever's research found only one carrier — Sir Wms Warrant (reg. #9196894), a May 1978 bull that had been labeled a carrier of *Heterochromia irides* (HI) in 1982, limiting his use as an Angus sire.

As detailed in the announcement posted to www.angus.org newsroom, "cattle affected by OH have eyes with irises that are pale blue around the pupil with a tan periphery. Their hair coats have a slightly bleached color. While some affected calves have sensitivity to light, they are believed to be otherwise normal functionally and physiologically.

"Beever's research indicates the source of the condition in the Simmental population was likely a commercial Angus cow that was a founder animal to a line of black Simmental cattle," the statement added.

The announcement further details that "although they are two separate genetic conditions, OH and HI exhibit many of the same characteristics."

The American Angus Association is working with the University of Illinois to screen widely-used Angus bulls and potential carriers to determine the impact of the genetic condition. For more details, including a list of sires tested for the condition and the policy (dubbed a labeling policy) set by the Board for handling the condition, go to the newsroom at www.angus.org. Commercialization of the test to identify carriers is expected; however, tests conducted to date have been handled through Beever's lab at the University of Illinois.

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