

Angus Talk

Outtakes and interviews from Angus Talk radio



Angus CEO shares vision

Host Doug Medlock recently visited with Allen Moczygemba, CEO of the American Angus Association, for the company's Angus Talk radio show. Here are some outtakes of their conversation.

Q: Tell us, what interested you in being the CEO of the American Angus Association?

A: Moczygemba: First and foremost, it's the American Angus Association, the greatest and largest beef cattle breed association in the world. That says a lot about it, but Angus is more than just a breed of cattle. There's Certified Angus Beef (CAB), there's Angus Genetics (AGI), there's the Angus Foundation, there's Angus Productions (API). It's more than just a breed association. That's the first part.

The second part is the depth of Angus in the industry, if you will. Even if you don't have a purebred operation, those Angus cattle have an enormous influence across the commercial herd. . . . When you factor in the terrific team at the Angus Association, whether it's at Certified Angus Beef or at the headquarters in Saint Joseph, I wanted to be a part of that.

Q: This is a new experience for you, since you don't have experience within the organization. Is that a strength, to look at the organization from a different angle?

A: Moczygemba: I think it is. And it's a different experience for the Association, as well, because typically they hire from within. But I do bring a different perspective, a broader perspective, that I hope will help continue the growth of Angus.

One thing is important to note: I don't have that breed association experience, but I do have 30 years of experience in the cattle industry. In fact, I grew up on a commercial cow-calf operation in south Texas, so I have a deep appreciation for the history of the Angus Association and the legacy of the breed.

So, I think when you combine those two, it should allow me to do some new and innovative things with the Association. At the same time, it's also about respecting the history that has occurred and continuing to grow the organization in a meaningful way.

Q: The Angus Association is an interesting organization, certainly different than other breed organizations. . . . After interviewing for this position and learning about this organization, did anything surprise you?

A: Moczygemba: You know, I wouldn't say surprised, but impressed is a better way to put it. The fact that the Association has had so much impact on the cattle industry as a whole, as a result of all the different aspects of Angus I mentioned a moment ago. They are driving the trends in the industry, whether through genetics, through the performance of the cattle, or through their retail product.

You're probably aware of this, but recently CAB released a new app for consumers on how to prepare beef right. There are just so many different aspects that Angus is a part of in the cattle business. To go back to your earlier question, that's what attracted me to Angus. They are much more than a breed association.

Q: There are certainly a lot of layers. In your evaluation of the organization, are there some weaknesses you found, or some strengths we can build on?

A: Moczygemba: There are certainly a lot of strengths. I wouldn't say there are any weaknesses. Every organization, frankly every person, can do better at what they can do, but I didn't come in here and say, "Wow, here are some weaknesses they should be concerned about."

Are there opportunities here? Absolutely. Are there opportunities to have the organization become even stronger and grow in certain areas? Yes, without a doubt.

Q: How does somebody wrap their mind around all the products and services the organization offers — and not only be familiar with all these details, but manage an organization like that?

A: Moczygemba: It's going to be a steep learning curve, but fortunately the team at

Angus across the board is very talented and very experienced, and I'm going to rely on them. I've got a lot to learn, and I'm going to do a lot of listening over the coming weeks in getting my arms around the organization as a whole. But at the same time, there's nothing broken there. We just look forward to growing and getting better at what we do.

Q: What are some of the things you want to get done in the first three or four months?

A: Moczygemba: There are three key areas. First and foremost is pulling the team together. I think that we need to get everybody pulling in the same direction with the same shared vision of what the future looks like for Angus. I'll be in both offices quite a bit, the Saint Joe headquarters and then the Wooster office, at Certified Angus Beef (LLC). That's the first thing.

The second thing is that it's time to begin work on updating the long-term strategic plan. The one done in 2011 was terrific, but it's a five-year plan and we need to initiate that process again. I've been gathering input from our members and our stakeholders in the industry, and we'll begin the next chapter of a journey, if you will.

And then third, and this is really important as well, we need to develop a comprehensive commercial program for cattlemen in this country, and we need to do it in such a way that we leverage technology, rather than create some program that very few people would use. So, we'll get a task force put together, and we'll start identifying what exactly we need to do to best serve commercial cattlemen.

Q: As you look at the organizational structure of the Angus Association and all its entities, how do you plan to bring all those folks together?

A: Moczygemba: I don't know [that] they're not together right now, to be frank. I think there is a way to build upon the synergy between these programs for efficiency, and become better at what they do. I don't think it's [a matter of] bringing them together, but bringing them together more closely.

Q: What can members and staff expect from your style of leadership? What is your work style?

A: Moczygemba: They'll see, like everybody else in this business, I'm a hard worker — get there early, stay late. But that goes without saying when you're in agriculture. As far as my style goes, it's collaborative and builds upon consensus — to make sure we do have that shared vision, and then we pull in the same direction.

The other thing they'll be seeing while I'm there — I want everybody to have a seat at the table in our discussions, particularly the long-term strategic discussions. I'm guessing not everybody's going to agree with every decision I make, but I think one thing they will agree on as they get to know me is that I care and I like to know all sides of an issue.

Q: The Angus business has had a banner year. We've had record prices for registered-Angus seedstock, another record-setting year at Certified Angus Beef, and bigger numbers of cattle coming into production in the coming years, which means, most likely, downtrends in prices. How will the American Angus Association keep its focus to keep demand and prices high, both for registered Angus and Certified Angus Beef® (CAB®)?

A: Moczygemba: It's a great question. As the herd expands and the supply increases, prices will go down a little bit, but when you have the premium breed, the breed that everyone wants, and, in turn, there's a premium for the cattle qualifying for *Certified Angus Beef*, then we're in a really good position.

Having said that, there are still things we could do. We need to penetrate that commercial cattle market. Angus has done a great job historically, but there's opportunity to do more. . . .

Then on the consumer side, John Stika and the team at Certified Angus Beef have done a great job, [with] nine consecutive years of record growth. I'm sure number 10 is coming up. They just opened an office in Tokyo, so there's an international presence. We want to continue to connect that breed and brand of Angus to consumers and their dining choices.

Q: Some people have questioned the relevance of breed associations. How can an organization like the American Angus Association stay relevant in the future?

A: Moczygemba: Well, they've done a great job. This association has always had, has always been, at the forefront of making decisions that are good for the longer term and the bigger picture. I don't

see that changing. I see more growth continuing; I see more and more Angus cattle. I was listening to Rich Wilson talk recently, and he mentioned that Angus has become synonymous with beef, which is true.

Q: How do you bring all the assets of the Angus Association and its subsidiaries together so they're more focused on building demand?

A: Moczygemba: The key is communication. We need to be communicating across the different parts of the business. Specifically, when I look at Certified Angus Beef, I look at Angus Productions, the Foundation, Angus Genetics, *et cetera*, there's an opportunity to really leverage this synergy of being part of the same association, and at the same time learning from each others' successes, and the different ways they go about doing business.

So, in January they'll have an executive meeting that begins that process. We'll sit down together, talk about our strengths, where we can continue to grow, and we'll do that collectively. That's important, because this is an association of talented, experienced people. I want to take advantage on that.

Q: One last question, but it's a good one: What's the one thing an Angus Association member can expect from you as you take the helm of this organization?

A: Moczygemba: I'll go back to what I said earlier about fairness. I will be fair in my decisions. I will not show favoritism to one group or another, but at the end of the day I want what a member of the Association wants. Whatever's best for the Association, that's what we need to do.

Our members are going to get to know me because I'm going to be out in the country quite a bit. I hope to meet a lot of our members, and commercial cattlemen as well, as I move into this role and as we move forward as an Association.



Editor's Note: Hosted by Doug Medlock, the American Angus Association's Angus Talk radio show features conversations with industry personalities from across the country. The program is broadcast each Saturday at 10 a.m. CT on Sirius XM's Rural Radio, Channel 147.



► American Angus Association CEO Allen Moczygemba also shared his goals for the future of the member-driven organization with Crystal Albers for an episode of *The Angus Report*. To watch the segment, readers of our digital edition can click on the photo above. You can also access the interview by directing your web browser to <http://bit.ly/TARmoczy>.