

AngusSource: We're Rolling Out Some Changes

by Sara Snider

Since AngusSource® was unveiled as a USDA process-verified program (PVP), the program has grown tremendously.

Along the way, we have adapted the program to meet growing industry needs. We added a feedyard umbrella to allow farmer-feeders and commercial feedyards to receive “coverage” from AngusSource. By making the program affordable and user-friendly we are able to assist feeders large and small with marketing their fed cattle. Premiums have been as high as \$35 per head.

Gateway was introduced in fall 2009 in response to growing customer demand. Producers wanted the opportunity to do all of their verification with AngusSource. They didn't want to have to seek out another program for calves that didn't meet our “Angus-sired” requirement. Gateway customers have access to the same outstanding customer service and marketing support as our AngusSource producers.

Enrollments in Gateway have exploded since it was first introduced. This year, it is charting growth of 80.5% through the month of August!

With the addition of the feedyard umbrella and Gateway, we have helped nearly 2,000 producers add value to their calves through verification. And, that number continues to grow.

During the past six years we have learned a lot. We've found ways to improve the program and to increase participation. We continue to learn. We are proud to say that with our growing knowledge, as well as the solid history and track record for integrity of the AngusSource PVP, we rolled out a few more changes Sept. 1, 2011. And we know you are going to like them!

No. 1: A new enrollment form

Our original requirement was for producers to complete our enrollment forms once. But, each time they enrolled, they submitted records and completed the training and calf enrollment via the phone. While this has worked well, for years producers have been asking us, “Can't I get a list of the questions and just fill it out?” The answer has always been, “No.” USDA requires that we conduct an interview with you, and that requirement will not change. What has changed is the enrollment form.

Producers will complete a new enrollment

form called the AngusSource/Gateway Enrollment Form/Agreement ENR 200/300 each time they enroll. The biggest benefit will be that producers can record the number of females exposed, number of females calved and live calf numbers in advance.

Currently, this is the part of the enrollment that takes the longest amount of time, usually because producers forget we will want this information, and they have to go back and count up their records while we wait on the line. We don't mind waiting, but we know that the quicker we can make the process, the better. Filling this out in advance will help expedite the enrollment.

We will still discuss the management practices, calving methods and other information about the operation during the interview, but we feel this new enrollment form will increase the accuracy and decrease the amount of time spent on the phone.

No. 2: Reduced records

Now here's some really good news. Semen receipts, lease agreements and purchased bred female receipts will no longer be required. We will, however, still need the registration numbers of all the sires — which means if bred females are purchased, the seller will still need to provide this information — and those bulls must be registered Angus. But, if producers are using an AI sire, they will just have to provide the registration number. We will no longer need a receipt showing they purchased the semen.

The new ENR 200/300 form includes an affidavit that will be signed with each enrollment stating the information is true and correct — and we know that it is. Six years of experience has proven that. So when producers give us the registration numbers, we will record it. No more receipts!

Leased bulls will be another change. Producers will no longer be required to keep lease agreements. They will just have to submit the registration numbers of all the bulls they used. All bulls must be transferred, whether owned or leased. That has not changed.

Remember, write it down

If there are any events that take place on the operation that may affect the eligibility to enroll calves in AngusSource, write it down: visiting neighbor bulls, AI to another breed of

bull, turnout onto Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land with other cattle, etc. The more records there are, the better the chances are that we will be able to work through the enrollment and identify the eligible calves. Our goal is to enroll as many producers as possible while at the same time maintaining the integrity of the program.

The new enrollment form was required for enrollments beginning Sept. 1, 2011. If you would like to request a copy of the new AngusSource/Gateway Enrollment Form/Agreement ENR 200/300, please contact the AngusSource department at 816-383-5100 or email angussource@angus.org, and we will send one to you.

One final change

It is with mixed emotions that I announce I am leaving the American Angus Association. I have accepted a job back home in northern Michigan. My husband and I are very excited to raise our family in the country near my family farm. I will miss working with all of you very much, but I am leaving you in good hands.

Ginette Kurtz, Jennifer Meek and Laura Cook will continue to provide outstanding customer service and an industry-leading source- and age-verification program. I want to say a heartfelt thank you to all of the producers I have been able to work with through the years. I feel blessed to have been able to have a small impact on the industry, and I will cherish the relationships forever!



The American Angus Association has named Ginette Kurtz its AngusSource quality manager.

Kurtz will oversee management of the Association's USDA Process Verified Program, which documents source, group age and Angus genetics.

A Missouri native, Kurtz grew up on a diversified livestock and farming operation before receiving her bachelor's degrees in animal science and agricultural economics from Missouri Western State University. Kurtz, her husband, Andy, and son, Seth, reside in Clarksdale, Mo., where she continues as a working partner on the family farming operation.