

# Angus Benefits from BIF

Progressive convention offers benefits to Angus breeders.

by **Kasey Brown**, associate editor

**T**he Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) is a unique situation in that the federation is composed of competitors in the beef industry. However, these competitors join to move the industry as a whole forward. This collaboration is also true among academicians, breed associations and cattle producers.

Phil Howell, Winchester, Ind., says the variety of attendees is one of its draws.

“BIF attracts academicians, commercial and seedstock cattlemen, feedlot operators, nutritionists, bull studs and more,” says Howell. “It is fascinating to visit with everyone to hear each other’s backgrounds and perspectives. The Angus breed is leading in many aspects, but there are others who are working very hard to catch up. We can all learn from each other, and help polish our own procedures.”

Dave Nichols, Bridgewater, Iowa, has attended all 47 BIF meetings and agrees.

“What’s so interesting about BIF, and why I’ve been to 47 of them,” he says, “is because it is the most interesting group of people. It’s one-third scientists, and we’re learning the best things in research; then one-third represent breed associations; and then one-third are producers like I am, both commercial and seedstock. A lot of good things about this conference happen in the hallways with conversations.”

Don Schiefelbein, Kimball, Minn., explains that BIF is the leading organization that has plowed progress toward genetic improvement. Angus is a leader in genetic improvement, and it is important for Angus breeders to attend BIF and join the conversation.

BIF serves as a connection between some of the smartest educators and cattlemen who can take home this information and make improvements, Schiefelbein adds.

This conference has a good mix of general information that all Angus members would benefit from, and there is enough technical data that really astute breeders can dig into, Steve Olson, Hereford, Texas, says.

“It is exhilarating to see the prominence of the database and the work of the American Angus Association. It is good to see how our work affects the entire industry,” Olson offers.

Dan Moser, Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI)



► Hundreds of cattlemen, academic researchers and breed association representatives gather yearly at the BIF annual convention. Watch a conference overview at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRQ-MH0m99U&feature=youtu.be&t=4m36s>.

president, emphasizes that the convention is incredibly beneficial to all in the beef industry, and especially Angus breeders.

“I think there are educational efforts there to understand the broader industry so Angus breeders can plan for the needs of their customers. It also helps them catch up with technology that will be in front of them very soon.”

This year’s conference, themed, “Expanding Focus,” offered an inaugural Young Producers Symposium; two general sessions focused on rebuilding the cow herd; and technical breakout sessions. The breakout sessions included advancements in selection decisions; emerging technology; producer applications; cow herd efficiency and adaptability; live animal, carcass and end product; and genetic prediction.

“There is a lot of interesting discussion about all the new technology impacting the beef industry, and on genomics and how that adds accuracy to genetic prediction,” says Moser. “Additionally, there is discussion on a lot of new traits that are being measured — some traits that impact adaptability, such as heat tolerance and feed intake.”

Much of the discussion includes items to take home.

“We keep hearing a guiding principle of avoiding single-trait selection,” says Howell. “A thought that I had while listening to a session was to avoid single-tool selection. We



► Conversations in the hallways are part of the appeal of the BIF annual convention.

need to balance using whole-herd reporting, genomics, phenotypes.”

Nichols offers that learning this new technology helps beef compete with other proteins.

Next year’s annual convention will be in Manhattan, Kan., June 14-17, 2016.



**Editor’s Note:** The 2015 BIF Annual Convention was hosted by Mississippi State University and the Mississippi Extension Service June 9-12 at the Beau Rivage Casino and Hotel in Biloxi. The Angus Journal and LiveAuctions.tv provide comprehensive online coverage of the event at [www.BIFconference.com](http://www.BIFconference.com). Visit the Newsroom for summaries, proceedings, PowerPoints and audio of the sessions; the Awards page for announcements of award winners; and the Photos page for photo galleries of the tour.