

Will Your Ballot Count?

As you receive your ballot to elect delegates to represent your state at the national convention, follow these tips to make sure your vote counts.

by **Shauna Rose Hermel**, editor

In last year's delegate election process, 4,518 ballots were received by the deadline, but only 4,425 were counted. Excluding the ballots that arrived late, 93 ballots weren't included in the election process. Here are some tips to make sure your ballot counts this year.

Nominations of delegates to the American Angus Association's Convention of Delegates closed June 30. Those nominated will be checked to make sure they are active members and that only one representative per membership is presented on the ballot. Ballots will be drawn up by state and mailed

to active regular and life members. Nominees will be listed on the ballot in the order in which their nomination was received.

Members have until Aug. 7 to vote for whom they would like to represent them in Overland Park, Kan., Nov. 5. To ensure your vote is counted:

▶ **Be sure your membership is current.**

Only active regular and life members as of July 1 will automatically receive a ballot. Those establishing or renewing a membership after July 1 may request a ballot.

▶ **Turn it in on time.** Last year, 173 ballots

arrived after the deadline and, by rule, were not counted. According to the bylaws, ballots must be received 90 days prior to the Annual Convention of Delegates, meaning this year they must be received by Interim CEO Rich Wilson by Friday, Aug. 7. Don't count on the mail getting to Saint Joseph in two or three days. When you receive your ballot in mid-July, fill it in and return it.

▶ **Sign your ballot.** Last year, 70 members failed to sign their ballot. Your ballot can't be counted unless it has your signature.

▶ **Vote for the correct number of delegates.** The election ballot will say how

Vying for the Board

It doesn't take a million-dollar war chest, a brilliant political advisor or camera time kissing babies to run for a seat on the Board of Directors of the American Angus Association. It does take a genuine desire to serve the members and the breed, a thick skin, and a willingness to put forth ideas for others to consider — and often critique.

It is imperative for the breed to have quality candidates apply and attain seats at the director's table. After all, once the ideas are pitched and discussed, when all is said and done, the future of the Association rests in decisions made by the officers and directors of the Board. As a member, you assert your influence by either running for the Board yourself, or supporting candidates that best represent your member needs.

The Bylaws of the Association set forth rules for electing candidates to fill unexpired terms, but normally, delegates to the Annual Convention each year elect five directors to a three-year term. Board members just completing their first three-year term may declare to run for re-election, while the Association counts on other members to step up to fill the positions vacated by retiring directors.

To adequately serve the membership, the Board should reflect the membership. Now is the time to announce your candidacy or to encourage the leader you want to represent your interests to run as a candidate for election to the Board this November.

Who can run?

Article IV, Section 4.2 of the Bylaws of the American Angus Association specifies that directors "shall be at all times either Active Life Members or Active Regular Members" of the Association. Regular and Life Members must be residents of the United States, including its territories or possessions, or Canada. A Life Member is considered active if "they have engaged in the registration of purebred Angus cattle within the last three (3) years." A Regular member is considered "active" if he or she joined the Association in one of the last two fiscal years or paid annual dues in the current fiscal year.

Other than that, the Bylaws provide few stipulations as to who should be a director and how a member is to declare their candidacy for the Board.

Many state Angus associations conduct their annual meetings in the winter, and often those intending to run for a Board position will seek the support of their state association's board of directors or their state's membership at that time. A state field day, tour or preview show may also serve as launching pad for a candidate to

gather state support. While it is not necessary to have this state support, it generally bodes well in the election process.

Declaring intent to run

Once an individual has decided to declare their candidacy, he or she should inform the Association CEO via a letter of intent. The letter doesn't have to be fancy or formal, but letting the Association know will place the candidate's name on the official ballot, and will give the candidate access to information about the election process, a list of delegates and two sets of mailing labels to the delegates and alternate delegates.

The *Angus Journal* traditionally publishes short biographical sketches of the Board candidates in the October issue, giving delegates and members an opportunity to learn a little about the candidates before the Annual Convention in November. To be published in the October issue, candidates must submit their biographies (500-700 words) and photos to editor Shauna Hermel by Aug. 15.

It is not required that a candidate have their biography published in the *Angus Journal*, but it is a good way to introduce candidates to a broader circle of the membership, letting members know their background and what they hope to achieve as a director. As with any election, the name of the game is to become known as a favorable candidate before the election in November.

During Angus events at the Angus Means Business National Convention & Trade Show, declared candidates are given 10 minutes each on stage to introduce themselves and their platform during a Candidate Forum. After their introduction, each candidate is asked to respond to a set of questions selected by the officers from among those submitted by the audience.

If they want to know more about the candidates, delegations may ask candidates to participate in a state or regional caucus prior to the Convention of Delegates.

Finally, a delegate may nominate a candidate from the floor during the Annual Convention.

Once nominations cease, it's all done but the tallying.

— by **Shauna Rose Hermel**, editor

Editor's Note: To access the Bylaws from www.angus.org, select "Rules and Forms" in the pull-down menu under the "About" tab. If you have additional questions about running for the Board, contact Diane Strahm at 816-383-5100.


many delegates your state is entitled to have at the convention. Vote for no more than that number. If your state is eligible for seven delegates and you vote for eight, your ballot will be null and void. You can, however, vote for fewer than the allowed number. So, in the instance above, if you were to vote for six members, your six votes would count.

You can write in the name/address of and vote for an active life or regular member from your state who is not presented on the ballot. Remember, write-in votes count toward the number of votes.

► **Mark your ballot correctly.** This year's ballot will look a little different, but the

instructions will be clearly marked. To vote for someone, completely fill in the oval beside the name using a No. 2 pencil or a black or blue ballpoint pen. Don't use a felt-tip pen. Xs and checkmarks will not register in the automated tallying.

At its June meeting the American Angus Association Board of Directors elected two election observers — Brian Brockman of Missouri and Ron Hinrichsen of Kansas — to come to Saint Joseph Tuesday, Aug. 11, to oversee the counting of ballots. These two people are responsible for making sure the voting is done properly and for answering any questions that might arise.

It takes about two weeks to certify every state's delegate list. Membership status is again checked. As spelled out in the bylaws, ties are broken by drawing names. The person receiving the most votes within the state will be elected chairman. Once certified, the list of delegates and alternates for each state is posted online at www.angus.org and published in the *Angus Journal*. 

Editor's Note: *If you have additional questions about the delegate election process, contact Diane Strahm at 816-383-5100.*