



Field Notes

► by *Don Laughlin and Chuck Grove, regional managers, American Angus Association*

Using your regional manager

Answering questions, assisting with advertising and explaining industry programs are just a few ways regional managers can assist cattlemen. To help Angus producers make the most of their services, regional managers Chuck Grove and Don Laughlin explain their roles.

Regional managers' responsibilities are split between the American Angus Association and Angus Productions Inc. (API). What are your core duties with each?

Chuck Grove: Our most important responsibility is to be knowledgeable of Association rules and policies and to administer them fairly and consistently. In addition, we need to be familiar with all of the Association's programs and departments. We try to assist our membership (adult and junior) and commercial cattlemen however possible. This can involve anything from advertising to junior showmanship to explaining Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) to working a preview show.

Don Laughlin: I went to work with the Association in 1980, and at that time there were no regional managers who also worked for API. At that time, Terry Cotton, Dean Pike and Bob Kiger were selling advertising from the office in Saint Joseph, and the

regional manager duties were solely for the Association. Now, my core duties are to sell business for the *Angus Journal*, the *Angus Beef Bulletin*, the Special Services Department and the Web Services Department. This involvement varies from ad to ad and from project to project. Some I never handle, and some I am very involved with.

We also attend sales and, if advertising requirements are met, we work the ring during the auction if needed or perform other services, such as working the "box."

How have your duties changed since you started as a regional manager?

Grove: I've worked for the Association since 1975. The changes at the Association and in our business have been just as major — if not more so — as any changes in other areas of agriculture. Consider the new subsidiaries, departments and programs

developed during my tenure:

- Purchase of the *Angus Journal* and creation of API — and all of the responsibilities associated with advertising sales
- Certified Angus Beef (CAB) LLC
- Industry Relations and Member Communications Department
- Beef Record Service (BRS)
- AngusSourceSM
- National Junior Angus Association (NJAA)
- Angus Foundation
- National Cattle Evaluation (NCE)
- Expected progeny differences (EPDs; originally only three, now we publish 17)
- Dollar value indexes (\$Values)
- Sire Evaluation Report
- Use of ultrasound
- The *Angus Beef Bulletin*
- API's Special Services Department
- API's Web Services Department
- Angus Information Management Software (AIMS)
- AAA Login
- Electronic storage and transfer of registrations

Laptops, e-mail, cell phones and faxes also supported major changes in everyone's ability to communicate.

Obviously, all of these programs and technologies have changed the regional managers' responsibilities, time management and workload. Not all of the changes were popular with the membership at the times they were initiated, but the breed and our Association are thriving today as a result of these changes.

Laughlin: When I started, I had nothing to do with the *Angus Journal*. I was strictly a public liaison between the Association office and its members. We also worked with junior programs and commercial producers. With the added responsibilities of API's four departments, the job has been evolutionary in allocation of time and assets.

We also have more Association programs than ever before. AHIR has evolved to include



the BRS and NCE. We don't handle NCE or performance records, but it is our responsibility to have a working knowledge of all programs, including AngusSource, junior programs, commercial programs and a host of other things that have been added over the years. I now spend less time on farms and ranches and more time on the phone and computer.

What questions do you field most frequently?

Laughlin: We field so many questions about so many issues. They vary greatly by area and by season. In late spring and early summer, I get a lot of questions about junior show programs and rules. I have also received lots of questions about AngusSource.

There are always basic questions dealing with AHIR, registering cattle, where to find cattle, how to sell cattle, how to set up an identification (ID) system within a herd, how to use EPDs and anything else someone may want to know.

Grove: New members have lots of questions regarding AHIR and EPDs. Marketing questions would be the other area where both registered and commercial breeders are looking for solutions.

How can producers qualify for a regional manager to attend their sale?

Laughlin: Once a breeder runs the minimum budget (equivalent of two full pages of *Angus Journal* advertising within the year), then they qualify to have a regional manager present *if* there is not a time conflict. On sales that have the same dates, sales with API advertising get preference over sales of breeders who do not advertise. From there on, regional managers may handle their areas slightly differently. The way I try to handle scheduling conflicts is that if both firms run the minimum amount of business, then I attend the sale of the operation that has been running business every year consistently for the longest period of time. Many times that breeder has waited years to attain that date, and I consider it "theirs."

What support do you provide for junior activities in your region?

Laughlin: I try to provide assistance in many varying forms for state-level junior functions. One of the best services we provide is to be there to interpret junior Angus guidelines.



Editor's Note: Laughlin presented an overview of the regional manager position at the 2005 National Angus Conference in Kansas City, Mo. To listen to his presentation, visit the newsroom at www.nationalangusconference.com.

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