

Association Rewards Longevity

Employees rewarded for long-term employment, achievements.

by **Shelby Mettlen**, assistant editor

Each year, the American Angus Association recognizes employees who have chosen to remain members of its team for a number of years.

“Longevity awards are significant because they allow the Association to not just say thanks, but to demonstrate our appreciation by providing a small gift to these key members of our team,” says Allen Moczygemba, CEO. “It’s really important to celebrate these key milestones because of the sacrifice and loyalty that these individuals have given to the American Angus Association.”

The Association’s Longevity Awards are awarded in increments of five years to employees beginning after five years of employment and continuing through their careers. The awards are designed to recognize Association employees for hard work, dedication and professionalism.

Jason Kenyon, 10 years

Great Bend, Kan., native Jason Kenyon celebrated 10 years with the Association last year. Kenyon, now based in Pflugerville, Texas, is assistant director and a software



Jason Kenyon

engineer within the Information Systems (IS) team. He previously worked for United Health Group in Kansas City, but was looking to move to a smaller company when Kenyon’s wife,

Kathi, brought a posting by the Association to his attention.

“I had heard the American Angus Association was a great company to work for,” Kenyon says. “The company was just starting a large information systems move from Cold Fusion and PowerBuilder to all Microsoft.NET technologies, which was a good fit for my skill set.”

Kenyon says he enjoys the people he works with.

“You couldn’t ask for better people,” he says.

“My favorite part about my job is how technology is constantly changing and how the Information Systems team is getting to apply those new technologies to things like national cattle evaluation (NCE) and genetic testing.”

Kenyon admits that coming from United Health Group, an organization dealing with doctors and credentialing data, he didn’t expect the amount of data that Angus collects to compare.

“I was amazed and surprised at how much data is collected and used to further improve the breed,” he says. “That’s another part of this job I really enjoy — the complexity and challenges of managing and improving our systems to better collect the data and provide the tools needed to help our members.”

Kenyon, Kathi (his wife of 16 years) and their two daughters and two sons enjoy spending their free time outdoors hiking or biking, he says.

Marie Nell, 10 years

Marie Nell, a 10-year employee in Membership Services, says she started at the Association as a temp. They liked her so



Marie Nell

much, they asked her to stay. She’s been with the Association ever since.

The Saint Joseph, Mo., original says her favorite part of being a customer service

representative for the Association is talking to the breeders.

“I like talking to our guys on the phone,” she says. “You’d be surprised the stories I hear sometimes!”

Nell says she enjoys spending time with her co-workers, camping, fishing and hitting the casino in her spare time. Still, she says, her family remains the most important part of her life.

“I’m really proud of my family,” Nell says. She has three children and five grandchildren.

Kristin Toll, 10 years

California-born and -raised Kristin Toll left sandy beaches and salty air behind when her family moved to Saint Joseph 10 years ago. A Cali girl at heart, Toll says she and her husband, Don, who also works for the American Angus Association, have “made a great home here.”

Toll says she thought there “was only one kind of cow — the black-and-white spotted ones” — when she applied for a position with the Association. While familiarizing herself

with the area, Toll says she drove by the Association’s office and thought, “I wonder what they do there?” A day or two later, she



Kristin Toll

received a phone call from an agency saying they had a job for her — at the American Angus Association.

“It’s almost like it was meant to be,” Toll says.

She says one of her favorite parts

about working with the Association is that she is constantly learning.

“Coming from a non-cattle background, I was intrigued and open to learning about something I knew absolutely nothing about,” she says. “My favorite part of my job is that I feel like I make a difference in educating our members and helping them accomplish their goals within their herds.”

Working with the Association has opened the California girl’s eyes to the world of farming and ranching, she says.

“Working here has definitely given me a different perspective on the life of a farmer or rancher,” Toll says. “I’ve learned that their jobs aren’t easy.”

Most importantly, Toll says she’s learned what makes a great steak: “I’ll never settle for anything less than Angus now!”

Toll, her husband and their two daughters have two dogs and three cats. Toll says she enjoys cooking, watching movies, spending time with her animals and supporting her girls in all their activities.

Karri Mildenberger, 10 years

Karri Mildenberger has been with the Association for 10 years. Mildenberger works as an advertising coordinator for Angus Media’s publications and production team. The Nebraska native enjoys crocheting, gardening, sports and spending time with her husband, Hank, and their five children.

Chris Stallo, 15 years

The American Angus Association welcomed Chris Stallo 15 years ago, and he now serves as vice president of operations. The Marceline, Mo., native says his favorite part of working with the Association is that every day holds something new.

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“Every day is a different challenge,” he says. “It’s good to work with a great team with so many resources to allow us to provide our membership with services that help them do their job.”



Chris Stallo

Stallo and his wife, Suzanne, reside in Platte City, Mo., with their three sons, Noah, Alex and Ryan. In his spare time, Stallo enjoys hunting and fishing with his boys.

Ramona Brown, 15 years

Ramona Brown celebrated 15 years with the Association. Brown says she “just happened to be in the right place at the right time” when she began her career with the Association.



Ramona Brown

The Saint Joseph native says her favorite part of being a member of the Membership Services team is talking to the breeders.

“The guys and the stories they tell are really interesting,” Brown says. “You get to know them. That’s what I like.”

Teresa Steele, 15 years

Teresa Steele reached her 15-year milestone with the Association last year. Steele began working with the Association while she finished her last semester of college at Missouri Western State University and started as a full-time employee after earning her degree in information systems.



Teresa Steele

Steele loves horses and aspired to be a large-animal veterinarian as a young adult. However, she wanted to stay close to her family in Saint Joseph and opted for a degree from Missouri Western instead.

Steele is a mother and grandmother to two daughters and one granddaughter.

“I have a farm,” she says. “I like trail riding,

and I used to compete in dressage events, but the girls got busy with school and sports.”

Steele says she enjoys working with the Association because, “It’s a great company to work for. They really think of their people.”

Tammy Barnett, 15 years

Tammy Barnett was “over the moon” when she found out she had been hired into a position with the Association. Fifteen years later, she is still just as happy to have her job in the Finance Department.



Tammy Barnett

“I had always heard that the American Angus Association was one of the best places in town to work,” she says. She admits that until her hire date in August 2000, she had never considered applying, but she’s happy she did.

Brenda Weigart, 20 years

Twenty years ago, Brenda Weigart’s neighbor told her she knew of the perfect position for her: a job with the American Angus Association. Weigart applied and got the job.



Brenda Weigart

Saint Joseph-born and Savannah, Mo.-raised, Weigart worked her way up from an administrative assistant to operations coordinator of Membership Services.

“My favorite part of working with Angus is the people I am involved with every day — the breeders and the people I get to work with here in the office,” she says. “I feel like I have gained several lifelong friends over the last 20 years.”

Her co-workers are like an extended family to her, she says. “I’ve seen babies born, I’ve seen kids grow up and graduate from high school, I’ve seen people get married, and I’ve seen us lose people we love.

“My longevity is something I’m very proud of,” she continues. “It’s not just a personal accomplishment — it says a lot about the company. American Angus is a great company to work for, and I’m proud to be part of it. I plan to be here a lot longer.”

Weigart and her husband have one son and three daughters. She and her family enjoy the wildlife and their pets at their home in Savannah, and are the proud owners of a 1968 Pontiac Firebird and a 1976 Pontiac Trans Am. “We spend most of the summer months at drag-racing events and going to car shows,” she says. Weigart says she and her family also enjoy music and visiting wineries.

“I’ve been very lucky to have been given many opportunities, and I have had a lot of great mentors over the years,” she says. “I will never forget any of them and how and what they taught me.”

Gayle Billups, 20 years

Nebraska farm girl Gayle Billups celebrated 20 years with the Association. Billups began her career with the Association



Gayle Billups

in 1995 with the Information Systems department after marrying her husband and moving to north-central Missouri. She and her husband manage a commercial cow-calf

operation near Union Star, Mo., in addition to holding off-farm positions.

“I enjoy working here,” Billups says. “I like the challenges and variety of my job and the people I work with. I also like that I have some flexibility during calving season, when I need to be gone a few hours here and there.”

In her spare time, Billups enjoys gardening, fishing, hiking, playing softball, visiting family, riding 4-wheelers and riding horses.

“In other words,” she says, “I like about anything outdoors, and I don’t like to cook.”

Billups and her husband have three sons, a daughter and two granddaughters.

Jean McGuire, 25 years

Twenty-five year data-entry veteran Jean McGuire says she had wanted to work for the



Jean McGuire

American Angus Association since she graduated from college. McGuire says her favorite part of working at the Association is — you guessed it — the people.

“We hear

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about how friendly and great the people are all the time,” she says. “I like the people and I like what I do. I’ve made a lot of good friends here, and even the ones that have moved on from the company, I still keep in touch with.”

McGuire says she didn’t realize the

importance of information and expected progeny differences (EPDs) in the cattle industry before her time with the Association.

“What I like is that we have next-day turnaround,” she explains. “If someone enters an animal today, the paper goes back out tomorrow. Everything is efficient and right at our breeders’ fingertips.”

Positive feedback from breeders is

common, McGuire adds. “I hear from our breeders every day how friendly the people are here, and that’s always great to hear about your company.”

Originally from Rosendale, Mo., McGuire now resides in Saint Joseph and enjoys spending time with her family in Saint Joseph and Savannah. She has two children, a son and a daughter.

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New Faces at Headquarters

Chelsey Smith, Shelby Mettlen join Angus ranks in Saint Joseph, Mo.

by **Jena McReil**, digital editor, & **Shelby Mettlen**, assistant editor

The American Angus Association has a deep commitment to engaging and informing Angus breeders of all types. Chelsey Smith of Hays, Kan., has joined that mission in her role as the organization’s assistant director of events and education, and Shelby Mettlen of Lucas, Kan., has joined the team as assistant editor for Angus Media. Both young professionals took office at the American Angus Association headquarters in Saint Joseph, Mo.

Chelsey Smith

Smith is a former state secretary for the Kansas FFA Association, and most recently served as an outreach and donor events coordinator for the Kansas FFA Foundation while attending Kansas State University. She graduated in December 2015 with a bachelor’s degree in animal sciences and industry.

“Chelsey’s passion for education and the beef cattle industry will contribute greatly to our department and organization,” says Jaclyn Clark, Association director of events and education. “We’re looking forward to using her talents in planning and executing events and programs throughout the year for our youth and adult members.”

Smith completed a summer internship with the American Angus Association in 2014, where she was a graduate of the Beef Leaders Institute (BLI). She served as the activities and events intern for three months, and assisted in planning the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS), Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) conference, and many other state and regional cattle shows.

“During my summer internship with the American Angus Association, I was very impressed with the variety of events and activities made possible to Angus members,” Smith says. “I’m grateful for the opportunity to join such a high-caliber team and be part of the organization’s mission to support the nation’s cattlemen and women.”

In her new role Smith will be responsible for developing and planning activities and educational sessions for the Association and the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA). That includes Association-sponsored shows and events through the Roll-of-Victory (ROV) show program, Cattlemen’s Boot Camps, Raising the Bar conferences, the NJAS, and LEAD conference.

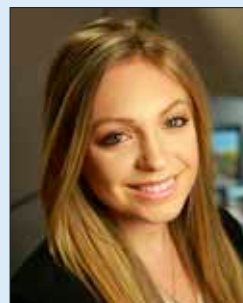
She will also help oversee the Association’s award program, which consists of the Angus Heritage Foundation, Historic Angus

Herd Awards, Century Awards and NJAA Awards.

“I am definitely ready to hit the ground running and hope to see many of our members at shows and events this winter,” Smith says.

Shelby Mettlen

Mettlen joined Angus Media Dec. 28 as assistant editor. Formally known as Angus Productions Inc. (API), the comprehensive marketing communications firm specializes in content targeted toward America’s quality-beef producers. As part of the editorial team, Mettlen will be a regular contributor to Angus Media properties, which include the *Angus Journal*, the *Angus Beef Bulletin*, the *Angus Beef Bulletin EXTRA*, the *Angus Report*, the *Angus Journal Daily* and a host of online information resources.



Shelby Mettlen

“Shelby’s work ethic and desire to help producers, combined with her writing and photography skills, make her the perfect fit to help us advance our media efforts in the years ahead,” says Angus Media editor Shauna Hermel.

Mettlen graduated from Kansas State University (K-State) in December 2014 with bachelor’s degrees in animal sciences and industry, and agricultural communications and journalism. She most recently served as a communications assistant for the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research on Sorghum and Millet at K-State, is a former writer for K-State Research and Extension, and is a freelance writer, layout designer and photographer.

“I am thrilled to have the opportunity to combine my passions for writing, photography and Angus cattle and to be a part of such a motivated, professional and experienced team,” Mettlen says.

As the assistant editor for Angus Media, Mettlen will be responsible for editorial production of the *Angus Journal* and *Angus Beef Bulletin*. She will also be responsible for writing original content for features and columns included in the *Angus Journal*, the *Angus Beef Bulletin*, the *Angus Beef Bulletin EXTRA* and the *AJ Daily*. Additionally, Mettlen will take part in television, radio and photography projects, and will travel to represent Angus Media and the Association at various events and conferences.

“I’m excited to start during one of the busiest times of the year for the *Journal*,” Mettlen says. “It gives me the opportunity to jump right in and learn how Angus Media and the Association serve their members. I’m so happy to be a part of that.”

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