



Movin' Forward

► by **Bryce Schumann**, chief executive officer

The great leap forward

Most of us know someone who manages fewer than 15 head of registered Angus cows. We also have friends and colleagues who own hundreds or even thousands of purebred Angus cattle. All classifications of Angus producers — whether they have a small, medium or large operation — are equally passionate and committed to the Angus breed. And all types of Angus breeders stand to benefit from recent advances in DNA technology and a newly formed partnership between Angus Genetics Inc.® (AGI) and Igenity.®

Industry advancing

The completion of the mapping of the bovine genome combined with a DNA testing chip that can collect 50,000 DNA markers on a single animal have now moved this technology to where it will have a profound effect on the Angus business and the beef cattle industry.

Much of the discussion at the recent Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) meeting was devoted to advances in DNA-based technologies (see pages 157-161). For instance, several presentations were given on the incorporation of DNA data into dairy genetic evaluation and the enhanced accuracy and precision this technology is providing that industry.

For me, it was eye-opening to see research results that showed accuracy levels for dairy marker-assisted expected progeny differences

(EPDs) in the 0.60 range on non-parent animals. There's no doubt that DNA technology is going to rapidly shorten the generation interval in the dairy business, accelerating the rate of genetic change.

There's also no doubt that we will see the same rapid developments in the beef business, and many of the speakers at the BIF meeting underscored the fact that the Angus breed now stands at the forefront in these advancements.

Standing a leader

In March 2006, the American Angus Association began discussions on how DNA technology would affect our business, and how we needed to position our breed and organization to shape its development for the advantage of all Angus breeders.

Following establishment of AGI in June

2007, we have worked closely with DNA companies and the research community to make possible the inclusion of DNA markers into national cattle evaluation (NCE).

These efforts came to fruition mid-July when AGI announced a partnership with Igenity. The partnership — the only one of its kind in the U.S. industry today — will provide Angus breeders with an Angus-specific panel that is available exclusively through AGI and the Association (See page 162 for more information).

This is a substantial economic advantage for Angus cattle, because it means that Angus breeders and their customers are now equipped with some of the most powerful genetic-improvement tools in the business. Coupling DNA with our existing cattle evaluation program will make it easier and more efficient to move more rapidly and accurately in our genetic-improvement efforts.

The coupling of Igenity technology with Angus NCE will result in higher-accuracy EPDs, especially for younger, unproven cattle.

This is great news for the Angus business. It is a partnership that will further advance the economic interests and the market strength of Angus genetics across the country.

It is also a partnership that will benefit small-, medium- and large-scale producers equally, enabling all of our members to select for more desirable genetic attributes in a much more rapid and accurate way.

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