



Movin' Forward

► by *Bryce Schumann, CEO, American Angus Association*

Razing the roof

The National Junior Angus Show is now in the history books, but it won't soon be forgotten.

A hair- and roof-raising experience

Halfway through the event, a freak storm struck the Louisville, Ky.-headquarters hotel, ripping a big portion of the roof from the building. Most of the debris landed in the parking lot, damaging about 60 vehicles and some surrounding structures.

Fortunately for all of the kids and their families in attendance, no one from our group was hurt. It could have been much worse, and we're thankful for the conclusion of a safe and successful event.

Most of us returned from Kentucky to face dried-out pastures and burned-up corn. We now understand that the drought gripping much of the United States is among the worst in our nation's history. People who had bountiful crops just a year ago are now faced

with prospects of not having enough feed to make it through winter. U.S. cow herd numbers continue to contract.

But I think there are lessons in these difficult times that we can draw from our experiences in Louisville. Namely, I am always struck by the optimism and resilience of kids in our extended Angus family. They see the world in new ways, and their approach to building a brighter future for agriculture is built on innovation and optimism.

While we're faced with short-term challenges, we must continuously force ourselves to take the long view with our industry. The drought will pass. The economy will recover.

But without kids who enthusiastically embrace Angus stewardship — stewardship of their cattle, their land and their families — we have no future.

Please take a few moments each day to draw a little inspiration from the kids involved in the Angus business.

I'm proud of our Angus kids. There are now more than 6,000 members in the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA). Each one of them has a great story to tell, and every one of them is finding a way to create a future for themselves through the production and management of Angus cattle.

You can see by the level of participation in Louisville that they are excited about what Angus has to offer. And, for those who couldn't attend, we can measure their interest in the event in many ways: On Facebook alone, we had 210,000 views (or about 30,000 a day) related to NJAS during just the week of the show. On YouTube, we had 20,000 video views.

These numbers are up exponentially from where they were just a year ago, an indication that people are finding ways to look on the bright side of this business.

As we move into fall and as winter fast approaches, please take a few moments each day to draw a little inspiration from the kids involved in the Angus business. Find a way to help a neighbor who's faced with uncertainty. Help a kid you know find a path to the cattle business.

In this way, each of us — in our own way, on our own farms and ranches — can raze the roof on the limitations imposed on us by drought and tough economic times, and begin to build a brighter future for all of us.

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