



# Movin' Forward

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

## The new age

*The last five years have served up their share of challenges — and, more importantly, opportunities — for the Angus breed.*

### Managing risk

Much of the nation has been gripped by one of the worst droughts in memory. We've watched feed prices rise to historically high levels, challenging our ability to maintain viable businesses. Economic uncertainty has undercut consumer confidence.

As we've learned in recent times, the Angus breed is not immune from genetic conditions. No breed is. No breed ever will be. In fact, all breeds have faced — or will face — issues of genetic risk. How we manage that risk — in the same way we manage drought, long winter or economic uncertainty — is ultimately what matters most and will strengthen the Angus breed for years to come.

In August, following an investigation by Jonathan Beever at the University of Illinois, we learned of a new, simple recessive genetic condition in the Angus breed called developmental duplication, or DD.

Shortly thereafter, the Board of Directors voted unanimously to recognize DD

as a genetic condition. The Board also unanimously adopted a policy relating to the registration status of current and future animals determined to carry this mutation. The policy (see page 25) does not require or mandate the testing of potential carriers as a precondition of continued or prospective registration. Rather, the policy assumes that members will follow sound breeding decisions and make strategic use of DNA testing in dealing with this genetic condition.

The board and staff also moved quickly — in fact, more quickly than ever before — to make a commercial test for DD available to the industry. You can find out more about the test by contacting the Association or visiting [www.angus.org](http://www.angus.org).

### Going forward

As we look to the future and continue to advance the Angus breed, we encourage you to do three things as you move forward with your breeding program:

First, education is key, and the more you educate yourself about genetic conditions, the better positioned you are not only to breed around these conditions and reduce their frequency, but also to assist your customers. The Association has a wealth of information for you, and our staff is here to help.

Second, a powerful tool for Angus breeders is AAA Login at [www.angusonline.org](http://www.angusonline.org). Not only does this online tool allow you to view your herd inventory, AI certificate inventory, expected progeny difference (EPD) data, submit data and much more, it can also be used by you to identify potential DD carriers in your herd and to make breeding decisions to move beyond the condition.

What you may not realize is that Login is also available to your commercial customers, and I would encourage you to share with them this service, educate them about how to manage genetic conditions, and assist them in their breeding decisions. In effect, the Login service provides you — as a breeder of registered Angus cattle — a significant opportunity to provide even better service for your customers, and to position your operation as a source for education and information.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, keep in mind that many of the affected bloodlines represent productive cattle — cattle that still have a great contribution to make to the betterment of our industry. The discovery of this genetic condition does not — and should not — detract from the value that they bring to the industry. While

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we're faced with challenges like DD, we can never forget what Angus genetics bring to the table and the significant role they've played in building a better future for rural America.

America's Angus breeders have much to be proud of. We have written a story

of achievement and success like few in agriculture. The beef we raise is the highest-demanded and highest-quality product in the world. Because of our multi-generational commitment to quality, we've driven more value back to farmers and ranchers than any other production and marketing system. Plus, everything we do is driven by technology and the application of sound science.

All of these things reduce risk and add value for the people who've chosen to invest in Angus — and will continue to reap economic rewards for our members and their customers.

  
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