



Movin' Forward

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

Accept the challenge

Agriculture and politics: The two are sometimes closely related, in this case, surprisingly so.

One nation

Election Day may be over by the time you read this, but the date — the first Tuesday in November — still possesses significance to those of us in agriculture.

A federal law signed in 1845 mandates that the presidential election occur every four years on the first Tuesday in November. Lawmakers established the date in consideration for the country's then-vast number of farmers and ranchers. Any time before the first week in November would have interfered with harvest; any time after would have tempted winter storms.

Granted, a lot has changed in the last 167 years; yet, our country and the world still depend on a stable, safe and affordable food supply.

Unlike the agrarian times of the 1800s, the responsibilities of producing today's food supply rest on the shoulders of fewer and fewer Americans. Less than 2% of our nation's citizens make their living from farms or ranches, and only 17% of Americans now live in rural areas.

Those of us who've remained in agriculture face a big challenge: Keep food on the plates of the world's 7 billion — and counting — consumers.

The amount and quality of beef on the plate depends on us.

Consumer satisfaction

The 2011 National Beef Quality Audit released this summer revealed essentially three key actions for our industry to grow demand for beef. We must collectively:

- deliver eating satisfaction to our consumers;
- continue to ensure product integrity; and
- proactively tell the beef story.

Cattlemen's ability to deliver a positive eating experience depends on quality Angus genetics and increasingly uniform and consistent-quality beef.

While drought conditions, skyrocketing corn prices and land values plagued cattlemen this year, resulting increases in beef prices at the consumer level make a quality

eating experience all the more valuable. In other words, if consumers are going to pay more for beef, it had better be worth the extra cash.

Miranda Reiman of Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) Supply Development summarizes the potential for ranchers to move closer to that consumer target in a recent article titled "Uniform Higher Quality." I encourage every cattleman, Angus or otherwise, to read it on page 146 of this issue of the *Angus Journal*.

Essentially, it boils down to this: "In the cattle cycle, the depth and length of a rebuilding phase depends on beef's value equation. At these higher prices, the industry can't afford to simply produce the same amount of or more beef that disappoints."

That's the focus of the American Angus Association's new national advertising campaign, which debuts this fall and winter across the country. As cattlemen begin to rebuild the nation's cattle inventory, we want you to consider the opportunities of the Angus breed — to reduce risk through the use of the world's most comprehensive genetic evaluation system and to add value by increasing consumer demand for better-tasting beef.

Back in the 1800s, America centered its entire electoral system on the agricultural calendar. The challenge to produce the food of a nation hasn't changed.

Let's give it beef that satisfies.


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