



Movin' Forward

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

An important anniversary

This month, we mark an important anniversary for the American Angus Association. One hundred and thirty years ago this month, the American-Aberdeen Angus Breeders' Association was formed by a group of cattlemen at the Grand Pacific Hotel in Chicago.

An era of change

In preparing for this column, I thought a lot about that day, and how much the world has changed since that time.

Consider, for instance, a few of these things.

At the time of our organization's creation, much of the American frontier was still unsettled. People traveled by horse-drawn wagon or train. The phone was still a novelty. The industrial age had just begun. Men like Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, Gustavus Swift and Henry Ford had yet to write their legacies.

Looking back across the decades, it's easy now to see how it all unfolded. Yet the 1880s were nothing if not an unsettled time, with uncertain paths to follow. Profound changes were sweeping across every corner of the planet.

An urban shift

America was becoming an urban country.

The American Angus Association has remained true to its original mission.

For the first time in history, people were freed from their primary preoccupation of feeding themselves and their families, flocking to town to work in the factories.

This resulted in the birth of the American middle class, a profound sociological shift that continues to send ripples of change around the world. Countries like China and India, where 2 billion people now reside, have seen their incomes and standards of living rise, the result of unprecedented worldwide economic activity first spurred by the energy and ideas of 19th century Americans.

In spite of all these changes (including the dropping of "Aberdeen" from its name), the American Angus Association has remained

true to its original mission. Each and every business day that has passed since that November day in 1883, we've continued to register Angus cattle, conduct genetic evaluation, and promote the use of Angus to cattle producers across this great land — and around the world.

No one ever said this would be easy. We've faced down our fair share of threats: two world wars, economic depressions, the uncertainty of weather and markets.

Stronger together

Collectively, our organization's founding fathers believed our hands were strengthened by working together to advance our collective interests. One of the central, often-overlooked tenets that our Association plays is that it helps our members manage unforeseen risks by providing them with genetic-improvement tools and, at the same time, creates more value by marketing our product to consumers.

Each of us should take stock in the coming days of how far we've come since 1883. It's a hard-earned anniversary, but one that's deserving of reflection and thanksgiving.

Most of all, spend a few minutes thinking about how blessed we are that visionary people many generations ago thought enough of us — their still undefined future — to create a lasting and beneficial organization like the American Angus Association.

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