



# Movin' Forward

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

## New horizons

*Pathfinder® Plus and GeneMax™ protect and strengthen your investment in Angus.*

### Two new programs

A year ago at this time, the American Angus Association began a long-range strategic planning process that lasted for nearly six months until a document was drafted and approved by the Association Board of Directors in June 2011. One of the primary objectives of the plan is to grow demand for registered Angus cattle. In the coming months, Angus breeders will have two new opportunities that will do just that.

The first is called Pathfinder Plus, a voluntary, inventory-based maternal reporting system that will allow Angus breeders to more effectively capture reproductive trait data that will ultimately be used to create reproductive and long-term productivity selection tools. In addition to heifer breeding records, participating producers will also submit calf weight and disposal records and disposal codes for cows.

The goal of the program is to help Angus breeders identify the top-producing females in their herds, and to identify and cull unproductive cattle. This valuable information also furthers the Association's ongoing research initiatives to develop tools that measure a cow's productive life.

The second is GeneMax, a DNA test currently under development that will help commercial users of registered Angus bulls better hit the high-quality beef target. GeneMax is being developed in cooperation with Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI), Pfizer Animal Genetics and Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB), and will debut in the coming weeks.

The test will measure marbling and postweaning growth and is designed for high-percentage commercial Angus cattle. It will be offered at a price point that's economically feasible for commercial customers. It should be a valuable tool to

improve selection decisions at the ranch, as well as differentiating value for the feedlot.

This will give customers of registered Angus bulls a competitive advantage in the marketplace, allowing them to select — with precision — cattle that reach targets of the *Certified Angus Beef®* (CAB®) brand.

We believe both programs are like no others offered by other breeds in the U.S. cattle industry. They will give our members — and their customers — a critical competitive advantage. After all, we want the commercial ranching industry looking to us for productive, quality Angus females, and for services and technologies that can keep their families in business.

As we move into 2012, no one is taking the strong position of the Angus breed for granted. We're serious about making beef better. We're focused on making the Angus breed more productive. And, as we move into spring bull sales, we're committed to working harder than ever before to protect your investment in this breed.

There's a lot of success on the horizon for Angus cattlemen and women in the new year. Programs like Pathfinder Plus and GeneMax help you achieve it.

Happy New Year, everyone!

  
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