



Movin' Forward

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

The business breed

The Angus breed is the business breed, but it's also a "people" breed — people with varying backgrounds, varying herd sizes, varying opinions. Like our nation, the American Angus Association is made up of people who sometimes see eye to eye, and sometimes do not when it comes to setting the course for the nation's largest beef breed association.

Common threads

Despite those differences, the Angus breed is populated with good people who have integrity, vision and an undying love for Angus cattle. They believe in what this breed stands for, the quality of our animals, our beef, our people and our way of life.

Our differences are skin-deep. Look past them and you'll see those common threads that bind us — and the animals dotting our pastures.

Those Angus cows on green grass quietly and efficiently do their job, day in and day out. They always have. Through the various bumps and bends in our history, they raise calves; they graze the open Texas range or the hillsides of New York. They remain one of nature's most awe-inspiring creations, capable of converting grass and grain to nutritious and wholesome meat to feed our families.

Let's remember that. The Angus cows in our pastures are really the reason we're here, whether we're sitting behind a windshield, a board table or a desk in Saint Joseph. The desire to protect and better the breed binds all of us.

Our mission: *To provide programs, services,*

technology and leadership to enhance the genetics of the Angus breed, broaden its influence within the beef industry, and expand the market for superior-tasting, high-quality Angus beef worldwide.

The business breed continues to do that. We're moving forward. Angus breeders and their commercial customers are better-positioned for success now than in recent history.

Since the 2008 economic downturn, prices for registered-Angus bulls sold at auction and reported to the American Angus Association have risen sharply from \$3,031 per head in fiscal year (FY) 2008 to \$4,957 per head so far in FY 2014. That's nearly \$2,000 per head in added value, or a 64% increase in price, for breeders of registered-Angus bulls.

Gross revenue is also up significantly. Sales of registered-Angus cattle generated more than \$265 million in FY 2013, compared to just shy of \$210 million in FY 2008. That's a 26% increase, or more than \$55 million in additional revenue for registered-Angus cattle producers.

That value-added gap appears to be widening even more in FY 2014.

Fiscal-year-to-date revenue (October 2013 through March 2014) generated by registered-Angus cattle sold at auctions has increased substantially compared to the same time period a year ago: \$244.6 million in FY 2014 vs. \$192.5 million in FY 2013 — a 27% increase.

That equates to more than \$52 million in additional revenue for the first half of FY 2014 — or more than \$2 million in additional revenue per week for Angus breeders so far this fiscal year.

All of these things indicate Angus breeders are working hard to capitalize on their breeding programs' advantages as U.S. herd expansion begins, and that the breed's long-time investment in genetic evaluation, research and promotion are now paying big-time dividends.

More good news: Multiple surveys show the Angus breed is expanding its market share. This comes as the Association and its subsidiaries enjoy one of the strongest financial positions in agriculture, with more than \$44 million in consolidated assets as of FY 2013 — a 39% increase from the lesser economic times of 2008.

We're not taking our leadership position for granted. The Association and its members continue to focus on strategic opportunities for the Angus breed, including leading advancements in genetic technology and evaluation; a unification of the Association's public relations department and Angus Productions Inc. resulting in an expanding universe of media platforms; and increasing online technology for breeders to conduct their individual businesses.

The Angus breed today indeed remains the business breed — a business breed blessed with good people at every level, people dedicated to our Angus cows and a bright future.

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