



Movin' Forward

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

Blessings

The Angus breed has much for which to be thankful this spring.

Business growing

Spring is a time of renewal. Each year, our family welcomes its sudden arrival. Pastures green up, temperatures rise and a new calf crop reminds us of the gift and promise of new life. Those of us in agriculture are especially fortunate to see firsthand nature's beauty, and to respect her power.

May showers offer hope for needed moisture through the summer months to feed a growing herd. The rains clear the skies and freshen our focus on raising quality, healthy, profitable cattle. There's promise in spring, especially now.

Cattle producers are poised for a time of unprecedented growth given the current cattle outlook, and Angus breeders are well-positioned to lead the charge into what has become a herd expansion phase. Fiscal year-to-date figures already indicate more commercial cattlemen are recognizing the potential to fill their pastures with quality black Angus cattle.

At the midyear point on the American Angus Association business calendar, outstanding sales figures tell the story.

Sales for both registered-Angus bulls and females from throughout the fall and spring sale seasons reflect heightened demand.

According to data from Oct. 1, 2014, through March 31, 2015, female sales are up 45% vs. the same time period last year, with an average of \$5,266 per head. Similarly, the average Angus bull brought \$6,784 in the first half of the fiscal year. That's an increase of 37%. Gross sales in the Angus business topped \$185 billion — an increase of \$39.7 million dollars compared to the same time period last year.

When Angus cattle are bringing record prices, it's more important than ever that animals perform to their highest potential on customers' ranches. That's why more breeders are relying on genomic data to provide even more accuracy and reliability.

So far this year, we've seen a 54% increase in the use of high-density genomic tests and a 69% increase in the use of the GeneMax products. Meanwhile, registrations continue to tick upward, surpassing 167,200 for a 6.7% increase thus far in fiscal year (FY) 2015.

It was a bittersweet process composing this month's column.

It is exciting to see the demand for Angus cattle and for the services of the American Angus Association and its affiliates expand and grow. We are truly in a time in the beef business that would have been unimaginable for our parents and grandparents. Many of us come from families that scrimped and saved and prayed for better times. Those times are now.

Yet, with that said, many of us would trade the time we now enjoy for the chance to have a little more time with those who helped build the rewards we enjoy but are no longer with us.

It is hard to understand the impact a friend, relative or great leader has had on your life until they are no longer there. This February, our breed lost a great leader and a shining example of hope, of faith and a true role model for the Angus breed, National Junior Angus Board Chairman Cory Watt.

I am sure that I speak for scores of people positively impacted by him in his short time with us. For me he was and continues to be a source of strength, of faith and of inspiration in the trials faced in daily life. In Cory's words, "Do your best, and let God do the rest."

Indeed, our nearly 25,000 members, our Association and its entities have many blessings to celebrate.


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