



Movin' Forward

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

Forward

My column this month couldn't be more appropriately titled. After the last few weeks of challenges for our staff and the Board of Directors at the American Angus Association, that's just what we're doing — moving forward.

Progress through challenge

The American Angus Association, then the American Aberdeen-Angus Breeders' Association, was formed in 1883 by a group of like-minded breeders who recognized the need to work together in order to better propagate and ensure the success of the black-headed breed that dotted their pastures.

Since that time more than 130 years ago, our organization has grown monumentally.

It's also seen its share of challenges: proxy voting in the early 1920s and the fierce debate that nearly destroyed the Association; a fire that gutted the Chicago headquarters; decisions related to open artificial insemination (AI); the introduction of performance programs; the birth — and near death — of the world's first branded beef program; and the purchase of the *Angus Journal*.

While contentious issues at the time, these events through the years eventually spurred progress for our organization. Today, the vast majority of the nation's cow herd includes Angus genetics. Surveys indicate this trend and demand for quality Angus beef will continue well into the future, and breeders prepared to

feed that need are seeing the rewards (see "The Good News," <http://bit.ly/1l8N0Cu>.)

The departure of 12 members of the Association staff announced this spring has understandably caused questions and concerns from many of our members. The details of the departure are outlined in letters posted to www.angus.org, as well as a response to such concerns in "Editor's Mailbox" (see pages 40-41).

Your concerns for the well-being of our organization have been heard and thoroughly reviewed by our Board of Directors and Association staff. Let me assure you, the actions taken the last few weeks in regard to this issue in no way compromise our position as the overwhelming leader in beef cattle genetics, nor our focus on genetic improvement and evaluation. The genetic capabilities of your registered-Angus animals and the consumer's desire for *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) remain unchanged.

We hold dear the market position and capabilities of the Angus breed, and are propelling our organization into the next phase of growth.

Join us

More than 90 employees arrive at the American Angus Association offices every morning in Saint Joseph, Mo. These dedicated employees work day in and day out to maintain our unrivaled customer service. We've maintained our 24-hour-turnaround time and uninterrupted service despite recent staff and structural changes.

We remain the nation's largest beef breed organization and release the weekly National Cattle Evaluation (NCE) every Friday. All breeder-submitted data and DNA samples are being processed, and Angus sales and events are ongoing across the country.

AGI customer service is fully staffed, and samples for genetic testing are being received and processed on time. Recalibration of the genomic trait tests and the introduction of a genomic-enhanced expected progeny difference (EPD) for tenderness are carrying on as planned for release this year.

We've named a vice president of operations; we've reworked our events and education arm and named associated staff (see pages 86-87); and we have interviewed several candidates for performance programs and regional manager positions. By publication, I anticipate many more positions will be filled.

The American Angus Association remains "The Business Breed." The common thread that binds all of us — member, staffer, director — is a love for Angus cattle and the desire for the breed to succeed.

The progress we're making at the American Angus Association will ensure that success, with the support of our members. I welcome your continued input and invite you to join me in moving our breed forward.


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