



Movin' Forward

by Bryce Schumann, CEO, American Angus Association

A plan for success

Success breeds complacency. Complacency breeds failure. Only the paranoid survive.

— Andy Grove, former Intel CEO

Don't settle

Today, we know the Angus breed as one of American agriculture's greatest success stories. Industry figures show much more than two-thirds of the nation's cattlemen use Angus genetics, and the word "Angus" is embedded in the nation's vernacular thanks to the overwhelming success of the world's largest beef brand, the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand.

Three or four decades ago, most would have thought these things impossible. Of course, it hasn't happened on its own. It took years upon years of ingenuity, hard work and a willingness to explore new ways of doing things.

In the 1970s, the state of the Angus breed was altogether different.

Continental breeds grew in popularity. Angus registrations and Association income languished. Partway through the decade, the industry entered what would become a 30-year decline in the percentage of Prime- and Choice-grading cattle and, therefore, plummeting consumer demand.

Beef's outlook was bleak. Luckily, hope emerged.

Angus enlightenment

In his book, *A Historic Angus Journey*, Keith Evans writes that despite the daily challenges incurred by breeders at the time, the 1970s were actually an age of enlightenment. Breed leaders set the tone for progress and innovation. Traditional Angus breeding gave way to scientific data. An open policy for artificial insemination (AI); the evolution of national cattle evaluation (NCE); the formation of the Certified Angus Beef (CAB) Program; the purchase of the *Angus Journal* — all were made in the spirit of discovery and a shared fundamental belief in the capabilities of the Angus animal.

Breeders had a vision that went beyond the day-to-day view and steadied on the long-term outlook. They pushed our member organization to move beyond anything anyone had ever seen. Other breeds failed to do the same.

Uncharted territory

The most recent sales data show outstanding figures for registered-Angus cattle nationwide. Sales reported this fiscal year (FY) through April have garnered \$93.5 million more than the same time period for FY 2014. Female averages are up 48%, at \$5,202. Bull averages rose 36% at \$6,747.

There's a lot of optimism for what the fall holds for our members and their commercial customers. They're already planning the next generation of progress.

It's AI season for spring-calving herds at the time of this writing and a perfect time to plan for success. Feedstuffs are more affordable, and there's always hope for abundant moisture and green pastures. More producers are tapping into better-quality genetics and hitting higher quality grades. Our nation's herd is expanding.

Angus has risen to the top of the industry through a willingness to look beyond the norm, to continually explore possibilities to move us forward and set the future for our kids and those that will come after them.

Exploring and then adopting new technologies like DNA testing will be paramount for what I hope will be a new "age of enlightenment." I urge you to think about areas where you can raise the bar for our organization, your herd and those of your commercial customers.

Success makes for complacency. Stay hungry for new horizons.

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