

Angus in the Heartland

Angus fans gathered in Missouri to celebrate the breed and prepare for the future.

Story & photos by **Brooke Byrd**

In a week that was alternately overcast and brilliantly sunny, participants of the National Angus Conference & Tour gathered Sept. 27-29 in Kansas City, Mo. More than 300 people from 27 states, as well as Australia, Canada and Denmark, visited the Heartland to share friendship, see great cattle and explore the future of the Angus breed. Purina Mills, LLC, sponsored the conference and tour, as well as real-time coverage of the event at www.nationalangusconference.com.

The conference kicked off Tuesday, Sept. 27, with four "Back to the Basics" seminars detailing the variety of American Angus Association programs available. That evening, keynote speaker Tom Field gave producers a wake-up call to focus on the future (see "Show Me the Future," page 82).

On Wednesday, Sept. 28, producers were treated to an incredible slate of speakers, then traveled north to Saint Joseph, Mo., to tour Association and Angus Productions Inc. (API) headquarters. After visiting each department and putting faces to friendly voices, participants ventured farther north to Ol' MacDonald's Farm in Savannah, Mo., to see cattle displayed by Midwest producers and enjoy a delicious *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) dinner.

Thursday, Sept. 29, got off to an early start when five buses and a caravan of cars and trucks headed off to Missouri ranches. With stops at Circle A North in Huntsville, Fox Run Farms LLC in Mexico and Sydenstricker Genetics in Mexico, tour attendees experienced technologically advanced feeding and genetics programs, Angus cattle, several CAB meals, incredible hospitality, and a variety of other wonders.



► The National Angus Conference & Tour drew 320 people from 27 states and three foreign countries to Missouri to see Angus cattle and focus on the breed's future.



► The conference began with four "Back to the Basics" seminars given by Association staff. Don Laughlin (above), regional manager, and Sally Northcutt (left), director of genetic research, discussed regional managers' roles and selection indexes, respectively. Ty Groshans, assistant director of commercial programs, and Lou Ann Adams, director of information systems, spoke about commercial programs and online tools.



► The reception Tuesday evening gave conference participants the chance to visit and relax before listening to keynote speaker Tom Field. Conference attendees came from across the United States for the chance to learn more about the breed and how to keep it going strong.





► Participants toured Association and API offices Wednesday afternoon. Producers said they were glad to visit with and meet people they had only talked to on the phone. Staff members took the time to chat and answer questions.



► Above: The National Angus Conference & Tour allowed Angus producers to interact with Association staff members and Board directors and officers. President Minnie Lou Bradley (right) welcomed attendees to Missouri and was on-hand throughout the three-day conference and tour.



► Producers from across Missouri gathered at Ol' MacDonald's Farm in Savannah Wednesday evening to showcase their genetics. Conference participants saw great cattle and enjoyed a CAB dinner.



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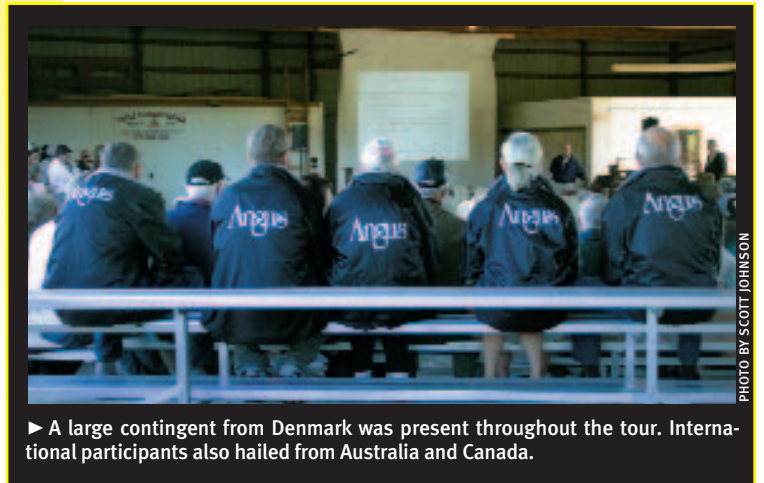
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► Thursday's first tour stop was at Circle A North in Huntsville. Circle A staff members boarded each bus to provide a running commentary as the buses circled the property's rolling green hills. The Huntsville ranch comprises 2,000 straight-Angus commercial cows and retains commercial Angus bulls (below) for use within the cow herd.



► The feed intake research barn allows Circle A to monitor the exact consumption of every animal using the Calan system. A machine measures exactly how much feed goes in each bin, and each animal has a tag that opens the gate to its specific bin.



► A large contingent from Denmark was present throughout the tour. International participants also hailed from Australia and Canada.

PHOTO BY SCOTT JOHNSON

► Five buses and a caravan of cars and trucks arrived at Fox Run Farms on the second stop. Producers received a CAB meal and saw the operation's Angus herd on beautiful grounds. Fox Run manager Danny Lynn was present to answer questions.



PHOTOS BY SHAUNA ROSE HERMEL



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► Even the littlest ranchers enjoyed the National Angus Conference & Tour. Rance (left) and Blake Long, Baker City, Ore., take a break from scoping out cattle at Sydenstricker Genetics.



PHOTO BY SHAUNA ROSE HERMEL

► Eddie Sydenstricker (right), grandson Chase (left), and Ben Eggers welcomed tourgoers to Sydenstricker Genetics. In addition to pens of bulls available for viewing, this stop offered kettle corn, a mule-drawn wagon and rides in John Deere Gators™



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