

FUTURE ANGUS STOCKMEN

New program awards scholarship to commercial cattleman Joel Osborn.

Story & photos by *Kasey Brown*, associate editor

Commercial cattlemen are an undeniably large component of the cattle industry. Commercial cattlemen are an integral piece of the puzzle in producing high-quality beef for consumers, and keeping them engaged and up-to-date on new tools is imperative.

Past American Angus Association President Gordon Stucky notes, “To emphasize the importance of those commercial cattle producers, our Board learned that the major source of new members to this Association over the past four years — by a factor of more than 20 to 1 — is commercial cattlemen.”

The American Angus Association has a new program called Future Angus Stockmen (FAS) to engage young commercial cattlemen with educational, networking and scholarship opportunities. The program, started in March 2015, began as a way to engage youth who want to be involved in the cattle industry, but who weren’t already involved in the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) or showing cattle.

Opportunities for young cattlemen

Ginette Gottswiller, American Angus Association director of commercial programs, says, “I asked a professor from a local college some questions about the students who planned to return to their family operations. He felt there was more student interest in production agriculture than in the past, but indicated there should be some discussion before the student returned to the operation.”

This education-based program will get them keyed into the American Angus



► Joel’s eyes light up when he talks about his souped-up John Deere 4440, with which he competes successfully in tractor pulls.

Association, show the benefits of using registered-Angus bulls, and provide access to tools available to them as commercial producers, says Gottswiller. For instance, participants will enroll each year and utilize some American Angus Association programs such as Beef Records Service (BRS) or MaternalPlus® at a reduced cost.

Additionally, Gottswiller adds, Future Angus Stockmen will get discounts to use genetic testing. They can use DNA technology like GeneMax® Focus™ or GeneMax Advantage™. They also get help marketing feeder calves through enrolling in AngusSource® or AngusSource Genetic.

Educational opportunities, entrepreneurial spirit and leadership development will be some of the overall benefits each participant can take away from this program.

Allflex and Destron Fearing are providing scholarships to students enrolled in a two- or four-year college who are majoring in agriculture and enrolled in this program.

The program’s first scholarship winner is Joel Osborn, Savannah, Mo.

Osborn Farms

The 18-year-old high school senior at Savannah High School has aspirations of returning to the family operation after college. A third-generation producer in northwest Missouri, Osborn helps his father John with their spring- and fall-calving cow-calf operation, their 800- to 1,000-head feedlot, and a few hundred acres of row crops and hay.

The operation shoots for high quality in all aspects. John decided upon commercial-Angus cattle after using various crosses that didn’t yield the carcass results or type of females he wanted. They get their genetics from Dick and Shelly Janssen at Green Garden Angus of Ellsworth, Kan. They also use tools from the American Angus Association like AngusSource®, and have from the program’s infancy, to showcase the quality cattle they raise. The electronic

► **Right:** Joel Osborn earned the first Future Angus Stockmen scholarship, which was awarded at the National Angus Convention & Trade Show. From left are Ginette Gottswiller, American Angus Association; Scott Holt, Allflex and Destron Fearing; Osborn; and Madison Butler, 2015 Miss American Angus.



PHOTO BY LEANN SCHLEICHER, ANGUS MEDIA

REWARDS

identification (eID) tags used in AngusSource allow the Osborns to get carcass data back from the packing plant.

They obviously study this received data, because Osborn Farms has won the AngusSource Carcass Challenge and the Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) Quality Focus Award for yards with fewer than 15,000 head several times. Joel says using solid Angus genetics has led to performing well on the grid and earning winning loads in competitions. For instance, they've had loads reach 90% Prime.

Joel is interested in coming back to the operation after graduating from either Northwest Missouri State University or Kansas State University, where he plans to major in agricultural business or animal science. Eventually, he hopes to expand the feedlot. Currently, they feed their own cattle and custom-feed cattle from area operations. Joel hopes to add another pen to feed more calves and to add a roller mill grain bin to grind feed more easily and efficiently.

"I would like to give local producers more control of how they finish out their animals," Joel adds.

He's even thought about the potential of a local store for butcher beef in the future.

However, before these plans come to fruition, John smiles and says, "He's got to prove himself yet."

While Joel is earning his sweat equity, his participation in the FAS lets John and him learn about genomic tools together. John says he's learned the hard way to pick replacement females by studying female lines and performance. That, together with Joel's experience judging livestock with his FFA chapter, still won't

guarantee how an animal will perform, both on the grid or as a replacement female. Future Angus Stockmen gives Joel a discount to use GeneMax (GMX) tests. GeneMax Focus will let them see gain and grade potential of tested calves. GeneMax Advantage shows more information about potential as replacement females.

Joel says he works with the feedyard cattle most often, but also has responsibilities in all

▶ Joel has responsibilities in all aspects of Osborn Farms.



aspects of Osborn Farms. He mixes feed, processes calves, builds fence, helps during calving, runs equipment during hay and silage seasons, rotates cows in their rotational grazing system, and more.

He has learned responsibility growing up on a beef cattle operation. He explains, "In the winter, when it's 10° below and the wind is blowing, I know that it is my responsibility to go out in the middle of the night and

check to see if there are any newborn calves. If I don't take care of my responsibilities and check those calving cows and heifers, there is a good chance we would lose a couple of calves in the night, resulting in a big monetary loss."

Additionally, in the summer, he sets up sprayers in the feedlot during high temperatures, and ensures that hay gets put up quickly to ensure it becomes as high-quality a feedstuff as possible.

He also built one of their two hot houses for calving season in an ag class at school. He enjoys welding and working with metal. He's currently working on building swing gates.

It's not all work and no play for Joel. He is active in his FFA chapter's livestock, poultry and agronomy teams, and he is the center for his high school's football team. Yet, what really makes his eyes light up is his pulling tractor.

"The connections, confidence and communication skills that can be gained from this program will be priceless to any young, enthusiastic producer."

— Ginette Gottswiller

He says he's been around tractor pulls ever since he could walk, and started pedal tractor pulls at a young age, because John and his friends always did it. He first competed when he was 12, and now drives a souped up John Deere 4440.

Tractor pulls are a project that he and his dad enjoy participating in together, yet it becomes an event for the whole family, including his mom, Toni, and sister, Jessica. Either university he chooses will be close enough that he can still compete in pulls with family and help on the farm. However, he does plan to get outside experience while at school, hoping to work at the university's farm or working for another area operation.

He says he is appreciative to Allflex for the scholarship because he plans to pay for his higher education through money he has saved and by working during school, in addition to what his parents have saved.

Future Angus Stockmen is designed to help young cattlemen with strong work ethics like Joel get a leg up on understanding available resources to help their operations, says Gottswiller. They also will have mentoring opportunities through the program.

Says Gottswiller, "The connections, confidence and communication skills that can be gained from this program will be priceless to any young, enthusiastic producer. Creating opportunity for our young producers — commercial and seedstock — will create continued breed success for every producer."

