

# Embrace Change

Miss American Angus explains the benefits of embracing change.

by Catherine Harward, 2014 Miss American Angus

**A** young man wanted to change the world. He found it was difficult to change the world, so he tried to change his nation. When he couldn't change his nation, he tried to change his community. As an old man, he realized the only thing he could change was himself. He realized if he had first changed himself he could have changed his community, by changing his community he could have changed his nation, and by changing his nation he could have indeed changed the world.

As we see in this story, change begins with the individual. It begins with one idea, one moment or one person. Change is constantly happening throughout our lives. Sometimes we create this change, and other times we cannot control it. However, whatever the reason for it, we can learn and grow from these experiences. I have learned that we embrace change by appreciating the change of our past, adapting to the change in the present, and making change for the future.

## Change of the past

Although we cannot always see the change that is happening around us, we can look to the past and point out pivotal moments that changed our lives. In my past, I look back on my childhood to specific times that I took a chance on change and was rewarded. First, I look back to a little 7-year-old girl in a Bible lesson at church and remember the pivotal moment I accepted Jesus Christ into my life.

My next significant moment occurred when I was 10 years old and I took a chance leading a show heifer into the showing for the first time. While I was born and raised on a beef cattle farm, it was the first time I had the opportunity to step into the "show cattle" world. Little did I know that decision would completely change my life and open up a world of opportunities, friendships, and provide me a passion that would shape the rest of my life.

While each of us have separate personal pasts, all of us in the Angus industry have a shared history defined by key pivotal moments. The foundation of the Angus breed began with one man taking a chance. It began with George Grant's idea to bring change to the beef industry of the United States. At the time, it was difficult for the community to accept his Angus bulls, and



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► Catherine Harward, Richfield, N.C., was crowned the 2014 Miss American Angus at the 2013 North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) Super-Point Roll of Victory (ROV) Angus Show, Nov. 18 in Louisville, Ky. Catherine, the daughter of Marcus and Patricia Harward, will represent the Angus breed at numerous beef industry events during her reign.

they were even called "freaks" at the local fair.

As time progressed, the bulls and their offspring were gradually accepted and soon ranged throughout the area and into the Midwest. Today, we can look at George Grant's idea and reflect on how the Angus breed has greatly benefited cattle herds since 1873. One man's idea to introduce a new breed first impacted his own herd, then changed his community, and eventually proceeded to change the United States beef industry forever.

## Change in the present

The change that is the most difficult to embrace is the change in the present moment. We all have a comfort zone. For

me, my comfort zone was a 150-acre farm outside of a small town living with my mom, dad and four sisters. The place I could look out the kitchen window to see my show cattle in the front pasture or jump on the four-wheeler to ride around the farm.

In order to grow as an individual, I had to face the unknown and step outside of this comfort zone. About three months ago, I took my first step to embracing change by attending North Carolina State University. Beginning college has required me to adapt to an abundant amount of change, such as higher academic expectations, new friendships and increased responsibility for myself. While stepping out of your comfort zone can be scary, it can also be exciting to know that the experiences and lessons you are gaining are shaping you into a better person.

Similarly, those in the business world must be willing to step outside of their comfort zone to maintain a successful operation. For those in the Angus industry, this may mean producers must make changes such as utilizing different Angus genetics to improve the quality of their herd or implementing updated technology on their farm. Throughout the country, producers have also adapted their operations to produce high-quality Angus beef through the *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> (CAB<sup>®</sup>) program.

CAB has transformed the industry by providing producers an outlet to sell high-quality Angus beef, as well as providing consumers a reliable, tasty product. This change began with a few producers and has led to an international Angus beef service that continues to improve and expand today. Stepping outside of your comfort zone is the first step in allowing change to impact your life and eventually the lives of those around you and throughout the world.

## Change of the future

While it is important to accept the change happening around us, it is also our responsibility to implement changes that will impact the future. We must be willing to go out and make a difference in society. Most of us recognize the popular saying, "Be the change you want to see in the world." I think this saying relates well to the future impact we can make in our lives.

Throughout my time as a junior Angus

member, I have witnessed the way other junior members have invoked change within the Association to not simply improve it for themselves, but to better the Association for others. Now, it is my responsibility to help in the future improvement of our Angus community for the coming generations. I hope to be the change in the coming years that will help propel our industry into an era of greatness.

Change takes many forms. It can be exciting or scary, it can come suddenly or take its time, it can be easy or sometimes extremely difficult. But, change is the only way that we as individuals can learn and grow. It is the only way we can better ourselves, our communities, our country



► **Left:** As part of the Miss American Angus competition, Harward presented a speech focusing on the benefits of embracing change. Other parts of the competition included completing a written test, an interview and answering impromptu questions from a panel of judges.

and our world. I would like to issue two challenges to all of us today: First, let us learn from the change in both our past and present; and second, let us be the change in our various endeavors starting now and leading into the future. Change is not always easy, but it is inevitable. The question is not whether change will happen, but rather how will we embrace the change when it does.

