

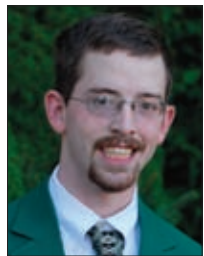


Next Generation

► Postcard from an NJAA director and state spotlights. Compiled by Mathew Elliott

Customer service: a common thread of success

Sweat poured down my face on a typical hot summer day in northern Kansas. Driving through a rocky pasture and putting out mineral was not making my day go any



Clinton Laflin

faster. I felt my left hip pocket vibrate, but decided to let my phone go to voicemail.

“Who could it be this time?” I thought to myself.

“Hello, Clinton. This is one of your bull customers.

Could you give me a call at your earliest convenience? I have a problem,” the message says. My heart sinks as I listen, and my mind races, trying to think of the problem.

People do business with you for three

reasons: They like you, they trust you, and they respect you. As a young producer, I was being asked by a trusting customer to help with his problem. Returning these phone calls is never fun, but sometimes it comes with the territory.

A bull that my customer had purchased from me became unable to service a group of cows. The bull suffered a severe injury after my customer turned him out and was no longer reliable. After listening to his story, and going over our options, I decided to give my customer a credit toward his next purchase.

Did I have to give my client a credit towards his next purchase? . . . No, but sometimes that is what it takes to build a long-term business relationship. If I didn't call my client back, he would be faced with a

major problem with a bull that he purchased from a seemingly uncaring producer. If you were that customer, would you buy more bulls from me? Routinely checking with your customers not only builds trust, it allows more potential customers to hear about the type of customer service you provide.

At the end of the day your customers could care less about how long you have been in the business or how successful you have been in the past. They care if the cattle they purchase from you will bring profit to their herd, and if you are going to be there for them when problems arise. When dealing with people, try to remember one of my dad's favorite sayings: “Say what you mean, and do what you say.”

— Clinton Laflin, Kansas

► LEAD (Leaders Engaged in Angus Development) Conference, Nashville, Tenn. Aug. 5-8

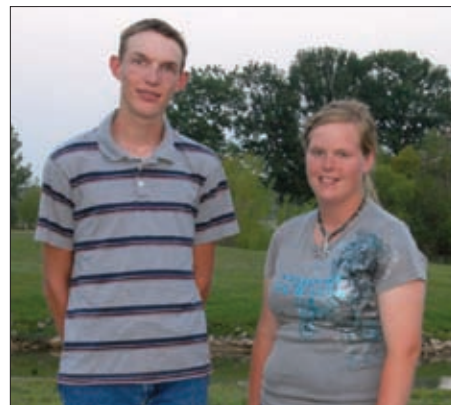
► A total of 207 youth and advisors from 34 states, Canada, Russia and Australia attended the Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) conference, “Angus: Live and Loud,” where they enhanced leadership and interpersonal skills while learning more about the beef industry.



► **Jasmine Nixon**, Taralga, represented Australia at the 2010 LEAD.



► **Pavel Matveev** represented Russia at the 2010 LEAD.



► **Kevin Bolduc** (left), Stavely, Alta., and **Megan Kemp** (right), Pilot Mound, Man., represented Canada at the 2010 LEAD.

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Visit the NJAA web site at www.njaa.info.

► **South Dakota Jr. Spotlight Show, Huron, July 24**



► **Left: Alex Rogen** (left), Brandon, receives his Bronze and Silver awards from Vern Frey, American Angus Association regional manager. The Bronze and Silver awards are the first two levels of the NJAA Recognition Program. Juniors must apply for the awards and then meet point requirements in many areas of participation before receiving them.



► **Right: Cally Thomas** (left), Harrold, receives her Bronze and Silver awards from Vern Frey.



► **Nicole Peckham** (left), Clark, and **Andrew Lau** (right), Armour, receive South Dakota Angus Auxiliary Scholarships.

Lauren McGill of Clover, S.C., was named the 2010 State Star Farmer by the South Carolina FFA Association during the recent state FFA convention held at Clemson University.

The presentation of the prestigious award, including a \$1,500 college scholarship, was made by Ronnie Summers, an official with AgSouth Farm Credit, on behalf of the South Carolina Cooperative Council, which sponsors the award in concert with the state FFA organization.

Lauren was recognized for her successful management of the cattle herd owned by North American Landscape Co. She was also cited for her ownership of 75% of the family farm, Circle M Farm, near Clover.



Editor's Note: Assistant Editor Mathew Elliott compiles this column. If you have "Next Generation" items to contribute, please contact him at melliott@angusjournal.com or 816-383-5277.