

Ohio Angus Association Cooperative Feedlot Program Initiated

Association sees need for involvement beyond showing.

by *Linda Robbins*, assistant editor

Allen Gahler, the secretary/fieldman for the Ohio Angus Association (OAA), says in the latest association newsletter that the OAA has strived during the past few years to develop programs and opportunities outside of the showing for the commercial cattleman and/or purebred breeder, and that they continually hear from members that additional opportunity for involvement would be welcomed.

Two years ago the OAA formed the Commercial Cattlemen's Relations Committee within its board. It has since put together programs including a fall field day and educational seminars at the Ohio Beef Expo, and expanded industry information in the newsletter. Additional programming and activities are in the works for 2011, including the hosting of an American Angus Association Cattlemen's Boot Camp, scheduled for Oct. 7-8 at The Ohio State University in Columbus.

Gahler says they are currently working on a new opportunity that will assemble groups of Angus-sired calves for grouped feeding and data collection. He says this opportunity will be coordinated by OAA committee members, who, with the help of cooperating feedlots, would assemble calves in the fall, collect performance data and send finished cattle to a packing plant that would allow carcass data to be collected and utilized.

The intent with the program is to utilize cattle owned by Ohio Angus members that are sired by a registered Angus bull, or cattle that are owned by commercial cattlemen sired by a registered Angus bull sold by an Ohio Angus member. Calves would be assembled and delivered by Nov. 15. The starting weight range would be 500 pounds (lb.) to 800 lb.

Members would have the option to sell calves, partner on calves or retain ownership of the cattle, and they would have access

to all data collected. In order to make such a program successful, they needed to hear from the members on what their interest in this type of program would be, how many cattle they could assemble, and what other goals they might reach for with the program.

Committee chairman Henry Bergfeld says he knows there are feedlots in the area with the capacity to handle the cattle and the ability to return data on cattle, and he thinks it would be beneficial for some of the smaller-scale purebred breeders and/or commercial cattlemen to have an opportunity to receive that data. Bergfeld says they are going to ask that calves be preconditioned before coming into the program; however, they will not require it at the start of the program.

"If we get enough response, we'd like to get this started this year," Bergfeld says. "We'd like to have enough to put together at

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least one potload, though we'd prefer two. We have had a fair response so far."

Bergfeld adds that he's hoping the response will enable them to have the calves ready to sort for uniformity by the first part of December.

"Ultimately, there may be a chance for our members to make some money through this program," Bergfeld adds, "but that's certainly down the road. What we're aiming for to start with is getting that data back to our members."

Following are a few questions that the committee asked the Association's members to respond to so they could utilize them to continually develop this and other commercial-type programs. Responses were gathered via emails to secretary@ohioangus.org or through having the members print and write their answers in, then mail the form back to the secretary at the address on the website.

For questions, comments, or to discuss the program, members were urged to contact Bergfeld at 330-223-1872 or Gahler at 419-350-2091.



Ohio Questionnaire

Following are the questions the Ohio Angus Association (OAA) distributed to its members through its newsletter to assess interest in starting a cooperative feedlot program. For more information on the development and progress of the program, call Henry Bergfeld, committee chairman, at 330-223-1872 or Allen Gahler, secretary/fieldman at 410-350-2091.

- ▶ How many Angus-sired calves do you wean per year?
- ▶ What are the dates of your typical calving season?
- ▶ Do you precondition calves before marketing?
- ▶ What percentage of calves is sold at weaning?
- ▶ Do you retain ownership of any calves on feed?
- ▶ Do you currently have access to growth and/or carcass data on your calves?
- ▶ If the feedlot program is launched for 2011, how many calves would you be willing to commit?
- ▶ Are there additional parameters you would like to see in this program?
- ▶ How far are you willing to travel to deliver calves to a group feeding location?
- ▶ What will it take to make this program successful and useful to the Association and its members?
- ▶ Do you have other program ideas for our commercial and purebred cow-calf operators?