

Speaking for the Industry

NJAA members speak up about beef and Angus.

To foster the development of speaking skills among National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members, the NJAA and the Junior Activities Department of the American Angus Association co-sponsor a public speaking contest during the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS).

NJAA members in the junior and intermediate divisions can speak about any subject pertaining to Angus cattle or the beef industry. Those in the senior division were

given the choice of two topics this year, including:

- ▶ Explain the beef industry market trends of the past year. Do you believe future market trends will be favorable or unfavorable? Why?
- ▶ The American Angus Association continues to build the amount of data and evaluation tools available to Angus breeders to make genetic selection decisions. Explain how phenotype

selection tools can be partnered with these genotype selection tools to aid in breeding better cattle.

Junior division speakers were to speak for 4-6 minutes, while those in the intermediate and senior divisions were to speak for 6-8 minutes. Each speech was followed by questions from the judges. The winning prepared speeches in each division follow.

Junior Division/ages 9-13:

From the Showring to the Runway!

by *Jacy Alsup, Gravette, Ark.*

It's my turn to walk; one more breath, and here we go. I can feel the judge's eyes as I walk past and still feel them from behind as I make my place in line. I'm hoping that the last few months of work will pay off. Whether I am walking into the showring with my Angus heifer or down the runway of a beauty pageant, one thing is certain: My heifer and I both need a healthy diet to be successful. As a pageant competitor, I understand the importance of looking my best, feeling good and being alert. As a beef producer, I appreciate the positive role of beef in my training diet to maintain the competitive edge.

Let's take a few moments and examine the fantastic nutrients found in beef, the facts on fat and the function of beef in a balanced diet.

Let's get started by looking at the fantastic nutrients found in beef. Beef is loaded with nutrients that are important for good health, not to mention good teeth, hair, nails and skin. Beef is a complete source of protein that is responsible for sustaining skin, muscles, bones, organs and more.

Beef is a great source of iron. Many girls my age suffer from fatigue because they are iron-deficient. Iron is necessary for maintaining energy. Beef contains a great amount of zinc that is very important for normal growth and development, mental awareness, and immunity. Lastly, beef is a great source of B vitamins. B vitamins are needed for skin and eye health, proper digestion, and production of red blood cells. Beef is better than beauty cream in a jar.

Now let's move along to the facts on fat. Fat is a great energy source and is vital to our bodies. It helps transport key vitamins into our bodies and through the walls of our digestive tract. Fat also protects vital organs and keeps skin and hair looking great. Fats play an important role in the flavor, smell and texture of foods.

Responding to the "calorie counters," the beef industry has trimmed up the fat by reducing external carcass fat by 6% in the

past 30 years. A greater reduction is made at the retail level as a result of hand-trimming fat from beef cuts. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), there are 19 cuts of beef classified as lean that fit easily into low-fat meal plans. In fact, top round steak has only 3.2 grams (g) of fat — just 0.2 more grams than a skinless chicken breast. Let's see — chicken, beef, chicken, beef — definitely beef!

There is no need to feel guilty about eating fat. It is a necessary supplement to a healthy diet.

Finally, let's look at the function of beef in a balanced diet. A balanced diet includes a wide variety of foods from five major food groups that include grains, fruits, vegetables, meats and dairy products.

Beef can be introduced as early as 6 months of age. Suggested serving for the meat group are two 3-ounce (oz.) servings for children, teenage girls, women and older adults, with three 3-oz. servings for teenage boys and active men. One 3-oz. serving of beef supplies more than 10% of the recommended daily allowances for protein, iron, zinc, niacin and vitamins B₆ and B₁₂, yet contributes less than 10% of calories to a 2,000-calorie diet. Beef delivers a bundle of nutrients for less than 200 calories. Calorie for calorie, beef is nutrient-dense.

The stage has been set, and now you can see the beauty in beef. Fantastic nutrients keep our bodies looking and feeling good. The fact is that fat has been trimmed up to fit in a healthy eating plan, and the function of beef in a balanced diet is beneficial for the young and old.

As I continue to raise beef and compete in pageants, it is my goal to make nutrition my official platform. Whether I have my eye on a purple ribbon or crown, I know that incorporating beef into my diet will give me the competitive edge. ■



**Beef is better
than beauty
cream in a jar.**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 302

Intermediate Division/ages 14-15:

America's Love Affair With Beef

by Catherine Connolly, Rogers, Ark.

Something's up! Have you noticed? It's happening right before your eyes.

Meetings over lunch, stolen moments in the afternoon, and long gazes over candlelit dinners. Recognize the signs? It's an affair!

Despite weeks, months and even years of rumors, this smoldering affair just keeps growing stronger. It's high time to get it out in the open. Are you ready for this? America is having a love affair with beef.

So, what's the attraction? Allow me to explain. Well, it's really rather simple — America's love affair with beef is enjoyable, safe and convenient.

America's love affair with beef is enjoyable. I mean, really, who can resist the aroma of a flame-kissed steak?

Beef contains a natural fat called marbling that is responsible for the sensational aroma and flavor. Ah, there is no need to worry when it comes to matters of the heart. More than half the fat in beef is monounsaturated fat, with cholesterol-lowering ability. This is the same heart-healthy fat found in olive oil, but, most importantly, a third of beef's saturated fat is stearic acid, which does not raise blood cholesterol levels. In fact, beef's six leanest cuts have only one more gram of saturated fat than a skinless chicken breast. On average, today's beef is approximately 30% leaner, 34% lower in calories and 21% lower in



America's love affair with beef is legitimate!

cholesterol than approximately 20 years ago.

And, there's no need to feel guilty about this enjoyable indulgence. This rich and satisfying meat is the No. 1 food source for protein, zinc and vitamin B₁₂, and is our most important dietary source of iron. A 3-oz. serving of beef has

six times more zinc, three times more iron and eight times more vitamin B₁₂ than a skinless chicken breast.

So the next time you're tempted — go ahead and follow your heart.

America's love affair with beef is safe. Protective measures are utilized from the gate

Senior Division/ages 18-21:

Extreme Makeover: Herd Edition

by Wravenna Phipps, Kearney, Neb.

Some people say that dreams can't come true. However, the popular television show *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* has proven that, indeed, dreams can come true. This show focuses on helping deserving families receive a complete home makeover in only a few days. Hundreds of carpenters and volunteers utilize a wide variety of tools to help them accomplish the task of transforming the old house into a beautiful modern mansion.

I see a direct correlation between that television show and our cattle herds. Both utilize tools to accomplish their goals and to attain the desired finished product, whether that be a beautiful new home or a greatly improved cattle herd. After reviewing the tools that are available for today's cattle herds, the application and importance of genotype selection tools for herd makeover and use, along with the relationship that phenotypic selection tools still has in our industry, I am convinced that you will agree with me — dreams can also come true for today's cattlemen by implementing an Extreme Makeover: Herd Edition.

In order to better understand how an Extreme Makeover: Herd Edition can take place, we must first be aware of the tools available for today's cattleman. As an Angus breeder myself, the first tools that come to mind when making genetic selection decisions are EPDs.

According to the American Angus Association's Web site, www.angus.org, EPDs (expected progeny differences) are the prediction of how future progeny of each animal are expected to perform relative to the progeny of other animals listed in the database. EPDs are expressed in units of measure for the trait, plus or minus. These genetic traits have proven to be a reliable

source of selection practices for Angus breeders for many years.

However, the American Angus Association didn't stop with just traditional data (birth weight, weaning weight, milk, etc.). They have continued to expand and develop these genetic tools so breeders can design a herd to fit their needs.

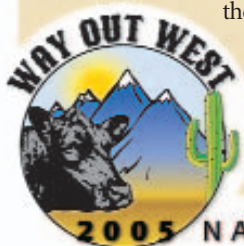
For example, a breeder in my home state almost entirely places his emphasis for selection on Angus carcass traits. He focuses on his herd's results in marbling, ribeye area, fat thickness, percent retail product and carcass weight. This has enabled him to produce cattle that excel in the feedlot and grade/yield situations.

Personally, I feel the addition of the dollar value indexes (\$Value) will prove to be one of the most beneficial traits to Angus and commercial Angus producers. \$Value indexes are multi-trait selection indexes, expressed in dollars per head, to assist beef producers by adding simplicity to genetic selection decisions. The \$Value is an estimate of how future progeny of each sire are expected to perform, on average, compared to progeny of other sires in the database, if the sires were randomly mated to cows and if calves were exposed to the same environment.

The Angus Association has done a great job making available a wide variety of tools so each ranch can make decisions for their own extreme makeover.

After looking at some of the tools available for cattlemen, now I would like to share with you the importance of genotype selection. Yes, it's true, we live in a fast-paced, highly technical world. Everyone is searching for that latest technology to enhance their lives. So, why should this be any different for Angus producers?

It's not enough to know what's available; the time has come to take that step of making it happen. Will Rogers once said, "Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you simply sit there."



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to the plate, ensuring a safe eating experience. Ranchers and producers stake their livelihood on raising safe beef. By practicing quality control procedures that exceed government requirements, producers are committed to producing wholesome beef that is recognized as the safest in the world.

Strict monitoring of beef at processing facilities utilizing Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point (HACCP) systems by the U.S. government ensures that consumers can continue to partake of their favorite meat as long as they practice proper handling, cooking and storage procedures.

Beef lovers can confidently enjoy all beef products by following the four safe food handling steps recommended by the Fight Bac! program: clean, cook, chill and separate. Simply begin with clean hands and utensils that have been washed in hot, soapy water. Cook food to a safe internal temperature, checking with a food thermometer. Chill

meat properly by refrigerating or freezing raw meat or leftovers within two hours. Finally, separate raw meat, vegetables and ready-to-eat food to prevent cross-contamination.

So, wipe your worries away. This affair with beef is safe.

America's love affair with beef is convenient. In spite of the time restraints of today's busy lifestyle, making memorable meals is still possible. America's beef industry provides convenience products to set the mood for any occasion.

When time is of the essence for those stolen moments, ready-to-eat beef products are available in minutes just around the corner at fast-food and carryout restaurants or your local delicatessen.

When there is just a little time for preparation and every second counts before that upcoming encounter, ready-to-heat beef products are at your fingertips. Barbecue brisket, burritos and pot roast

with gravy are available for a meal in minutes.

When you have the time to make the cooking experience pleasurable but don't want to spend the entire evening in the kitchen, try the scratch-fast products. Stouffer's Oven Sensations® and Skillet Sensations® Tyson fajita kits or Hormel beef tips could be just the solution you are looking for.

Convenient beef products are available to turn any amount of time into a satisfying experience.

Now your eyes are open — and it's easy to see why America is in love with beef. After all, flavor and nutrition make beef inviting and enjoyable. Protective measures from gate to plate make beef a safe experience, and even with the restraints of time, beef is convenient any time of the day. After looking at all the evidence, America's love affair with beef is legitimate! ■

We can all remember those old-school Angus cattle that started the ball rolling for many producers. They were really wide and short to the ground. It took many years for that style to change into what we see in the barn today.

However, with the genetic tools available now, along with the practice of artificial insemination (AI), large changes can take place in just a few years. If your goal is to make money with your Angus cattle, which I'm sure everyone's is, you need to stay in front of the competition.

According to the July 2005 issue of the *Angus Journal*, Gary Fike, a Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) representative said, "Those who have information behind their cattle will dominate." By applying these genotype tools in your herd selection, you will be producing a more predictable outcome with your cattle. And, that means more premiums to you, the producers. So, in

order to keep your herd on the cutting edge, the time has come to implement these genotype selection tools into your operation.

Finally, we need to look at the relationship that phenotypic selection still has in our industry. As a member of a successful college livestock judging team, I am often asked, "Why do we even look at cattle phenotypically anymore when such a large emphasis is placed on genotype and performance numbers?" Well, the answer is quite simple. Good cattle will always be good cattle. They still need to function, perform and stay structurally correct. Each producer should still identify what their cattle need to have for their environment.

This is where the practice of AI becomes nearly a must for producers. Within just a few matings, cattlemen can either improve both their genetic value and phenotypic appeal, or increase their cattle's numbers, without sacrificing quality.

Let's face it, folks, we live in an image-controlled society. Yes, even the local sale barns realize people want to see what they are buying, and then basic evaluation practices come into play. Even though ultrasound and genotype statistics can aid in higher prices for our cattle, they still have to be built right from the ground up. Some of

the most successful Angus operations have found ways to incorporate these genotype tools while keeping their reputation of producing top-quality Angus cattle.

Although genotype tools are vital for any herd's progression in the future, it is still only when coupled with phenotypic selection tools that we truly accomplish an Extreme Makeover: Herd Edition.

Reflecting back on the statement that people say dreams can't come true, we realize that yes, they really can. Television reality shows have reinforced that point and the show *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* is a great example of how, in only a few days, a complete makeover can occur. As cattlemen, we are also living in a day and age when we have tremendous resources available that can help us implement an extreme

makeover within our cattle herds.

Today, I have shared with you those tools that can help us make great improvements in a relatively short time frame. Second, I explained about the application and importance of genotype selection tools for herd use and makeover. Finally, I expanded on the relationship that phenotypic selection tools still have on our industry.

Today's cattle breeders have a golden opportunity to utilize proven tools that can aid in great herd improvements, just like a carpenter uses a variety of tools to build a home. I strongly encourage all cattlemen to jump on board and begin implementing genotype selection tools, without sacrificing the importance of phenotypic selection, within their herds, because dreams can also come true for today's cattlemen by implementing an Extreme Makeover: Herd Edition. ■

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Intermediate Division/ages 16-17: Once Upon a Time

by Jara Settles, Hoskins, Neb.

Once upon a time in a magical land, far, far away, there lived a beautiful princess. That's me. Hey, it's my story.

So, anyway, this princess raised the most incredible, sought-after Angus cattle in the land.

Every morning as I flung open my windows, what would I see but trailer after trailer lining the lane, waiting for a chance to purchase one of my animals. Price is no issue. . . .

OK, back to reality. As we all know, that is not the real world. We as Angus breeders must search out every option available to help market our product, and then maybe we can catch a glimpse of that faraway land.

Today I would like to discuss with you three ways that I promote my Angus program: listening to my customers, using technical advancements and creating a consistent product.

Upon meeting a prospective customer and developing them into a client, my first duty is to listen. In the fast-paced world of business and economy, months, and even years, are spent researching market demographics for a new product. The same should be true in my business. How can I put my program to work for them? I have a mental checklist for my prospective clients:

- ▶ What are the pastures like?
- ▶ How many cows do they have?
- ▶ What are their goals for their calf crop?
- ▶ Do they retain ownership?
- ▶ Are they purebred breeders?
- ▶ How many watering spots are there?
- ▶ What are their marketing options?
- ▶ Do they have a calving problem?
- ▶ What is the attitude of the herd?
- ▶ What are their feed and labor resources?
- ▶ What is the age of the client?



We as Angus breeders must search out every option available to help market our product, and then maybe we can catch a glimpse of that faraway land.

It is my responsibility to learn the prospective customer's management technique and styles. By my being an active listener, my prospective customer can give me insight into what I can do for him. Plus, you never know just what you may learn.

In promoting my Angus program I have used the traditional marketing methods — magazine ads, classified ads, flyers, consignment sales and the showing. These all work. But, sometimes, as Emeril LaGasse says, it's time to "kick it up a notch!"

The computer has given us a whole new venue. It all started with a digital camera (Dad's pride and joy). I started experimenting by taking pictures of my heifer projects. They turned out really well. Dad and I decided a Web page would be a cool idea. We created a Web page and uploaded my photos. It took off from there. We were getting calls from areas where we never expected to sell cattle.

Just the other day we received an e-mail from a young lady in Ohio looking for a heifer. I took the digital camera to the pasture, took some shots, uploaded them to the computer and, within minutes, she could see what I had to offer. The next weekend she picked up her new purchase. Three-fourths of the heifers I sold this year were via the Internet.

Isn't it thrilling to think of all the innovations that could come available to us in the future? I plan to explore each new option.

The Coke® in this can is the same as the Coke in this can and the same as in this can, and it's the same as the Coke in all the cans in the world. It's a consistent product. My goal as a breeder is to create a consistent product for my customer.

I have a cow herd base of Apollo daughters and granddaughters. These cows have been consistently bred to Famous and the heifers retained. I have chosen to breed these heifers to Grizz. As a result, I have a herd of three-quarter sisters.

I don't breed 10 cows to this bull, 10 cows to this bull, four cows to this one and eight to this one. I research and choose a bull to be used in my program. When a customer buys from me, whether it's two bulls or 10 bulls, he knows that, genetically, these animals are consistent. Consistency creates confidence. When my customers are confident in my product, they will be repeat customers.

Some people are multipliers — I want to be known as a breeder.

I feel I am promoting my Angus program every time I am talking about cattle or in the presence of other cattlemen and women. Today I have shared with you just three of my promotional techniques:

- 1) Listening to my customer,
- 2) Using technical advancements, and
- 3) Creating a consistent product.

So, as I throw open my windows this morning, what do I see but five more trailers pulling into the lineup? ■

