

# STATE SUPPORT



PHOTO COURTESY CHRISTY PAGE, GEORGIA ANGUS ASSOCIATION

Many resources and innovative programs are available at state Angus associations.

by *Kasey Brown*, associate editor

**A**ngus members have a great deal of resources available to them. The American Angus Association, *Angus Journal*, Angus Foundation, American Angus Auxiliary and National Junior Angus Association all work to improve the opportunities available for cattlemen. State associations are valuable resources at a more local level, providing many integral services to their respective state members.

"[State associations] let you be involved at the grassroots level in things that really relate to your state. We do our best to support our members through what we can do locally," says Amy Van Dyke-Crowder, executive administrator for the Montana Angus Association. "In terms of folks who may not travel to things like the National Junior Angus Show or get out of state much, it really offers opportunities to participate in programs and marketing."

"It really helps you establish a network. If you're a young or a small breeder coming in, there is a lot of camaraderie at the state level," she continues. "We definitely have a family

feel in our state. Everybody buys cattle from each other, shares opinions and talks shop. It's competitive, but very family-oriented, too. It is a great place to network and for people to start out, establish those connections and gain advice."

## **Tours**

There are a lot of cattle operations in the country, and many states offer opportunities to see those ranches through state tours.

The Montana state tour has been a staple for education, social interaction and marketing to Montana Angus Association members for 39 years, says Crowder. There are seven regional Angus associations within the state organization, and the tour rotates to each region on a seven-year cycle.

She explains that each local region customizes its tour to give the tour a different flavor each year. The regional associations make a bid for the state tour, and the Montana Angus Association serves as the major sponsor. The state publishes the

tour book with tour stop biographies, map and regional information within the state directory.

A fun aspect of the tour each year is the golf scramble. There are even belt-buckle

prizes sponsored by allied industries in each region. "The golf scramble and tour have become a vacation for cattle ranchers," says Crowder.

The tours are mostly focused on ranches, she adds, though in 2010 it coincided with the National Angus Conference & Tour (NAC&T), and there was

more of an educational aspect. However, though having some speakers in past events has been moderately successful, she says the tour's popularity is mostly as a social event.

Montana has had great success, with participants representing 23 states, three Canadian provinces, Brazil and Argentina. Crowder says there are generally about 250 attendees, though with NAC&T attendance jumped to more than 800 — the largest NAC&T ever.

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— *Suzanne Brewer*

► **Above:** Georgia Angus Association President Mike McCravy welcomes guests to the Fall Seminar.

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Like Montana, states that host the NAC&T see spikes in their attendance that year. In 2012, Kansas hosted the national tour. Typical attendance is about 150, says Anne Lampe, secretary and manager of the Kansas Angus Association, but the 2012 tour saw more than 400.

States like North Carolina and Nebraska also host state tours and say they each rotate among their respective regions within the state.

“The tours usually begin on Friday morning visiting a couple farms, lunch, more afternoon visits and finish up with dinner and a guest speaker; then repeat the process on Saturday,” explains Suzanne Brewer, North Carolina executive secretary. “Members are able to pick up a lot of ideas visiting other cattle operations. It is definitely good food, good friends and good Angus cattle!”

Josh Worthington, general manager of the Missouri Angus Association, says his state’s tour is sporadic, but Missouri also has a mini-tour for junior members — more like a Missouri junior academy.

Worthington says they modeled it after the American Angus Association’s Beef Leaders Institute (BLI) to engage young Angus producers. Four juniors are chosen from an

► **Right:** American Angus Association Regional Manager Matt Caldwell takes bids at the Kansas Angus Association-sponsored Commercial Angus & Angus-Influence Sale, Pratt, Kan.

► **Below:** McPherson County Feeders has been the Kansas Carcass Data Project host since 2011.



application process for the three-day trip. Worthington and Wes Tiemann, American Angus Association regional manager, take the juniors on a multi-state, three-day tour of different aspects of the beef industry. The Missouri Angus Association is able to provide this opportunity to the juniors free of charge.

“The goal for the program is to look back in the next 20 years and know that we helped provide some experience to the leaders of the industry. This helps broaden their perspective that they might not get in a normal junior event,” Worthington explains.

### Education events

Many times, tours can go hand-in-hand with state field days. Sometimes field days coincide with annual meetings, and sometimes they stand alone as a singular educational event.

The North Carolina annual field day is in the fall each year. The location varies depending on who volunteers to host, says Brewer. The day is filled with four to six



PHOTOS COURTESY ANNE LAMPE, KANSAS ANGUS ASSOCIATION

seminars, lunch and time for viewing cattle. They try to have seminars on new or current topics of interest, and there are usually 80-120 attendees, depending on location and weather conditions. Additionally, North Carolina uses this to partner with the American Angus Association to distribute literature about the Angus breed. She adds it is a great opportunity for promotion.

The Nebraska association collaborates with Husker Harvest Days, one of the larger farm progress shows in the United States, explains Suzy Hebbert, secretary and manager of the Nebraska Angus Association. Six to eight operations display cattle at the three-day show near Grand Island, Neb. More educational opportunities are provided through educational sessions prior to the annual meeting, she notes. These include genetic resources and tools, and marketing

tips through social media and other online media.

Many states have stand-alone educational events. The Georgia Angus Association started a well-received fall seminar this year, says Christy Page, executive secretary of the Georgia Angus Association.

“When we started it, we decided we wanted something in south Georgia to get members involved that might not be as active, and then also to try to get new members from that area. We had nearly 100 people in attendance. The event included speakers from Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB), Zoetis and Gardiner Angus Ranch,” she explained.

Seminar topics included genomic testing; expected progeny difference (EPD) accuracies within the Angus breed; practical application of genomic information; and GeneMax™, the genomic test for commercial Angus-based cattle.

Education doesn’t have to be in the form of lectures. The Kansas Carcass Data Project (CDP) is designed for producers using

registered-Angus bulls that may not have enough steers to make a whole pen at a commercial feedyard, but who want to retain ownership and collect individual carcass data on their steers. They can also feed a few head and compete for recognition and prizes in the contest, says Lampe. Kansas Angus Association members are encouraged to promote the CDP to their bull customers.

The Kansas Angus Association partners with CAB on the CDP. CAB sponsors up to \$1,000 in cash awards and

CAB merchandise to the owners of the top group of steers, based on the top three steers’ quality grade and *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand acceptance. The steers are fed at McPherson County Feeders in Marquette, Kan.

Lampe notes when the program started about 15 years ago, individual carcass data was difficult to obtain, and there were about 200-300 head entered. Once grids became more prevalent, enrollment in the program fell a bit, but the partnership with CAB about four years ago rekindled interest.

For more information on the Kansas CDP, read the October 2013 *Angus Journal* article “CDP Rookies Win.”

### Sales and shows

Many states provide numerous marketing opportunities for their members through

sponsored sales and shows. Most states cater to seedstock members, but a few offer sales to benefit their members' commercial customers, too. For instance, the Kansas

Angus Association started a commercial female sale 22 years ago. The sale is popular, selling 800-1,000 head at Pratt Livestock Inc. The Kansas association also hosts a long-standing spring sale

in Junction City, and in 2013 they added two more fall sales in Parsons and Paola.

These sales offer pairs, bred cows, bred heifers and open heifers, says Lampe. All heifers must meet CAB live specifications, having 51% black hide.

"It started out as a place to help out our commercial customers — for them to sell replacement-quality heifers that were out of registered-Angus bulls that were sold by the registered breeders in the state of Kansas. It bridges that gap that people are always talking about between the registered and the commercial industry," explains Lampe.

The Missouri Angus Association started their Missouri Angus Advantage Plus sale 10 years ago and sells 275 head of commercial cattle in Marshall, Mo. This lets them provide a service to the customers of their purebred members, says Worthington.

Sales and shows are great ways to involve members throughout the state. A unique program in conjunction with a state show and sale is California Angus Days. To involve junior members throughout the year, California Angus Association Secretary J.J. Reinhardt says, juniors earn Angus bucks at various events. These incentivize participation throughout the year, and they can be redeemed at the Angus Days show and sale for prizes.

In addition to facilitating sales and shows, the North Carolina Angus Association has a clerking service for their members. Brewer describes it:

"When I first became secretary for the NC association, a member asked me about clerking his production sale. Since many producers have a sale manager for the catalog and advertising, all they may need is a group to come in on sale day, give out buyer numbers, clerk in the box, write bills of sale and check out buyers. We do about five to seven of these sales a year.

"I feel this is a service to our members, it frees the sellers and their family to enjoy the sale, meet and greet their buyers and know

they're taken care of," Brewer says. "When the sale is concluded and all paperwork balanced, we give the person responsible for the sale all monies, checks, buyers list, invoicing info, etc., and an itemized printout explaining all transactions. I have many qualified people who have helped with this for several years, and everyone seems pleased with the job that we do."

To increase membership, North Carolina also offers a complimentary yearlong membership to buyers at association-sponsored sales in hopes they will come back and join. Brewer adds that if a member sends her the name of a buyer of theirs, she also adds them to the complimentary list.

### Communications

Most would say that communication is imperative to any successful association. Many state associations have quality newsletters, print magazines and member directories, that are free of charge to members. Emailed news updates or advertisements, often called "eblasts," are also popular.

The frequency of these eblasts vary per state, but John Finke, secretary of the Indiana Angus Association, says feedback tells him that members appreciate weekly communications with their association.

He emphasizes that increased communication with the members offers them better services. For instance, Indiana has combined membership forms and fees for the Indiana Angus Association, Auxiliary and junior association. This makes one membership deadline easier to remember and easier to remind through the eblast.

"The eblast includes any and all announcements from any and all members — whether they are about sales, shows, meetings or just special 'life' announcements. I offer two free advertisements a year, or two special blasts announcing their upcoming sales," says Finke. "Honestly, I try *any* angle I can find to make membership more valuable to every member. I can't justify asking them for membership dollars if we don't offer what they might be needing!"

Hebbert notes the advertising rates are reduced for members in the quarterly *Nebraska Angus News*, and their printer offers

discounts to Nebraska members for sale books.

Several states have a social media presence, and involvement is continually growing. Worthington said the Missouri Facebook page is a way to engage younger members and for members to get comfortable with the technology before it is a "necessity."

Hebbert said the Nebraska association's page is a good place to post deadlines to association events and shows, promotion of events, results of shows, results of the Association Annual Meeting delegate vote, and *Nebraska Angus News* advertising deadlines. She posts anything that may be of interest to the membership or "friends of readers" of the page. The friends of readers help reach potential new members.

Facebook is a way to engage the Angus family, even those who are not state members. She says recently she has posted about the effect of the Atlas blizzard that hit the Dakotas, Wyoming and northwest Nebraska.

### The Missouri Angus Association offers a beef academy to give junior members a broader perspective of the industry and develop them as young leaders.

— Josh Worthington

"While most of these producers may not be members of the Nebraska Angus Association, these families are fellow cattlemen, customers, neighbors and friends of our membership. We all can see ourselves walking in their shoes," Hebbert says.

All of the state representatives say that state membership gives members an Angus family, and the networking opportunities are a major draw for state membership.

There are a lot of reasons to join the American Angus Association, like registration, EPDs and the database, says Worthington, but states work to provide valuable tools to their members.

Members are not required to join the state association to register cattle, Worthington says, so states concentrate on providing services — whether it's through sales, shows, marketing opportunities via print or online, carcass data projects, seminars, social activities and more — to keep themselves relevant and work constantly to add value to their membership.

The American Angus Association maintains a list of regional and state associations, complete with contact information for officers and directors. To find your state or regional association, visit [www.angus.org/Admin/Links/AdmLinksStateRegion.aspx](http://www.angus.org/Admin/Links/AdmLinksStateRegion.aspx), located through the "Get Involved" tab on the newly designed [www.angus.org](http://www.angus.org).

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