

State Spotlight Series
featuring the programs and services of some
of the leading state Angus associations.

A Nod to North Dakota

In the Angus world, North Dakota is often amidst the action. In 2003, the state's Angus association hosted the National Angus Conference and Tour; in 2002-2003 North Dakota Angus breeder Steve Brooks served as president of the American Angus Association; and this past summer the state hosted a regional junior Angus show in Fargo.

North Dakota also has representation on the Association's national Board of Directors, with Richard "Dick" Tokach. Recently, Vern Frey, the state association's longtime secretary-treasurer, accepted a regional manager position covering the Dakotas and Minnesota for the American Angus Association.

The state is also credited with establishing 17 years ago the first state association-run bull test in Angus history.

Current North Dakota Angus Association (NDAA) President Robert White, an Angus breeder from Bowman, N.D., credits the organization's long-running success to the enthusiasm and hard work of its nearly 200 members. Although they may not form as large a membership as other state associations, White says North Dakota members are dedicated to their breed and to creating Angus opportunities in the state. Additionally, in 2003 North Dakota breeders registered 9,179 head of Angus cattle, ranking them 11th in the nation.

Organized in 1942,
North Dakota Angus Association
members have a long history
of working together to
promote their breed.

by Kindra Gordon

A rich history

North Dakota's Angus history stretches back to March 1942, when the first official meeting of the North Dakota Aberdeen-Angus Breeders Association was hosted in Valley City, N.D., with the purpose of increasing the influence of Angus breeding among cattle herds in the state. This group hoped that forming an association would also help create better marketing opportunities for its members.

In the 60-plus years since that first meeting, the association's name has changed, but the vision of current members remains the same. Today, the NDAA strives to achieve its objectives by sponsoring several annual Angus sales and events. These include the State Select Sale, North Dakota Winter Show Sale, and the NDAA-sponsored Bull Test and Sale, as well as the North Dakota Junior Angus Preview Show and a regular tour showcasing Angus operations around the state. Although the North Dakota Angus Auxiliary is no longer active, a scholarship fund it established continues through the association.

Among these activities, White says the association's annual bull test and sale, hosted near Dickinson, N.D., each April, is one of its most successful ventures. The event attracts interest from buyers

across the country and last year averaged \$2,743 on more than 70 bulls. A commercial heifer calf sale is conducted in conjunction with the sale.

"The bull test and sale has been a real opportunity to help smaller breeders promote their Angus genetics and grow their programs," says White, who serves as chairman of the NDAA's bull test committee. Six other members assist him on the committee, and White credits their hard work for the bull test's success.

With more than 40 regular consignors to the test, White says the annual event has proven to be a valuable marketing opportunity for Angus producers. For the NDAA, it is also their biggest annual fundraiser, with proceeds from the test used to further promote the Angus breed and state association through ads and activities at state and national levels. As an example, NDAA will often sponsor meals featuring *Certified Angus Beef*[®] (CAB[®]) brand product at different functions in North Dakota throughout the year.

Keeping members involved

Looking ahead, White, who is serving a two-year term as NDAA president, says his goal for the association is to keep membership growing and involved with the state association. He believes that can be accomplished by keeping junior Angus members enthusiastic and, in turn, getting their parents involved with the state association.

Being involved with other ag organizations in the state also helps give the NDAA visibility. For instance, several members often attend the annual North Dakota Stockmen's Association fall tour, which visits some Angus operations.

White also believes keeping members informed is an important element for the future success of the NDAA. Currently, they publish the *ND Angus News* throughout the year, and a membership directory every other year. The state association also hosts a Web site, www.ndangus.com, and White believes that will continue to be an important tool for members down the road.

