



The Front Gate

by Allen Moczygmba, CEO, American Angus Association

Understanding member needs

One of the keys for an association to serve its members effectively is to have a good understanding of its members' needs and, more importantly, their expectations of their association. Frankly, it's important that an association has an accurate measurement of the pulse of its members.

Member response

This past July we conducted a survey of the American Angus Association's members to gain their input for the Long-Range Strategic Plan that's being developed. We received an overwhelming response, with almost 2,000 surveys (1,943) completed. While the total number of responses was outstanding, better yet, the responses mirrored the makeup of our membership both in terms of membership registrations and geography.

While you'll be hearing more about the survey results in the coming months as we develop the Long-Range Strategic Plan, there are some immediate findings I think you'll find interesting. First, our membership is more diverse in terms of cattle ownership than many realize. While 38% of the respondents own only registered cattle, 45% own both registered and commercial cattle, while 14% own both registered-Angus cattle

and registered cattle of other breeds.

Also, our membership is optimistic about the future. When asked about their perception of the registered seedstock business as a whole, 58% felt that it will grow in importance during the next three years. More importantly, 63% of the respondents said that the Angus business will increase in importance during the same time frame.

Finally, when asked to identify the biggest opportunities for the Angus seedstock business during the next three years, first and foremost was the need to continue to invest in development of expected progeny differences (EPDs) and genetic-selection tools. The second greatest opportunity identified is to grow our services to the commercial cow-calf sector to better capture the value of Angus genetics. And, of course, members are optimistic — as they should be — about the continued market share growth of *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand product.

Director of genetic research

As we all know, one of the keys to the success of the American Angus Association has been our development of performance records. That commitment to breed improvement began with the introduction of Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®) in the late 1950s and was later followed in recent years by our embrace of new genomic technologies.

As we plan for future advances in Angus genetics, I'm pleased to announce that Dr. Stephen Miller will be joining the Association as its new director of genetic research.

Considered one of the leading beef geneticists in the world, Miller obtained his doctorate in animal breeding and genetics (specializing in beef cattle) from the University of Guelph. He has spent his career teaching and working in the genetic sector and most recently has served as the principal scientist at AgResearch Ltd. in New Zealand. He is eminently qualified to fill this critical role for the Association and, working under Dan Moser, will provide great leadership for Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI).

Steve, wife Charla and their children (Lukas, Virginia, Seth, Jedidiah, Mercy and Henry) are natives of Canada and have relocated to a farm southeast of Saint Joseph. In fact, the Millers' new place is just down the road from Venetta and me. It goes without saying that it's good to have new neighbors!

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