

What's New on the Web

Promote your breed. Advance your herd.

by **Crystal Albers**, assistant director of communications/web editor, American Angus Association

John Widdowson, SandPoint Cattle Co., knows it takes more than hype to sell cattle. The Lodgepole, Neb., cattleman and his wife, Laurie, sell approximately 200 bulls at auction each year and an additional 150-200 through private treaty.

The couple started their Angus operation in 1999 and have since grown their ranch into a 19,000-acre operation with two locations and about 2,000 cows. They developed a web site about four years ago as an additional marketing outlet.

"As society and the industry turn more to technology and web-based options, we're trying to keep up with the times and stay ahead of the curve," Widdowson says. "The number of hits from people from different states and countries would surprise you. It has a direct impact on sales and is an advertisement tool that we use very heavily."

Widdowson works to update his site regularly through a web design company. He says new data spurs customers into revisiting the site, available at www.sandpointcattle.com.

So when Widdowson saw that a

30-second commercial from the American Angus Association was available at no charge, he jumped at the opportunity to promote the breed and his herd.

"The video was a great new bit of information, a new twist," he says.

A series of three commercials have been produced by the Association and have appeared on several satellite television networks this fall. They're also available for producers to add to their own web sites.

Widdowson says the messages and data within each really hit home, particularly the commercial citing a study that showed \$35-per-head premiums for Angus cattle.

"I'm out here preaching about Angus every day, telling commercial customers that Angus cattle are the most sought after for the beef quality — from restaurants to consumers," he says. "When you have statistics, you can quantify it and show the actual return you're putting back into their pockets," he says.

Mark Norris, Sterling Cattle Co., Huntsville, Texas, certainly agrees. He is

working with seven other breeders to gain Angus ground in east Texas.

By forming the Foundation Angus Alliance, Norris says the group works to add value and increase the popularity of the Angus breed in a traditionally Brahman-dominated region.

"We want to be more than just a group of people trying to sell bulls. We want to be a source of information about Angus and promote the breed. If we can promote Angus and develop it more here, we'll be growing our businesses, too."

Norris recently posted one of the commercials to his web site, www.sterlingcattle.com. He plans to soon develop a site for the alliance as well.

"I was looking for something to put on our web site to tell the Angus story. When I saw the videos on the Association site, I knew that was it," he says. "They show that there's room for the average guy like me in the Angus business to make a living."

To view the videos, access the 'Power of Angus' playlist at www.youtube.com/apicreativemedia.com.

Contact Rich Masoner, manager of Angus Productions Inc. (API) web services, for more information on how you can post the commercials to your site.

