

Youth Marketing



Youth use a national platform to find niche in the beef industry.

Story & photos by **Mathew Elliott**

There are many ways to market cattle genetics in today's fast-paced information age, but two National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members have chosen good old-fashioned word of mouth — a South Dakota pair who has chosen to market their genetics in the showing and a group of Colorado students who are marketing their offering in “the Yards” during the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver, Colo.

Word of mouth

Andrew and Alex Rogen from Brandon, S.D., brought five head to show at the 2008 National Western Stock Show (NWSS) open and junior Angus female shows, as well as a bull to show in the Angus open show and one to show and sell in the National Western Angus Bull Sale show and sale.

Andrew thought it was important to get their bull sold at the NWSS not only for the money from the sale, but also for the exposure coming with exhibiting a bull in the only American Angus Association-sponsored sale.

“We want to find good producers who are willing to pay for good genetics,” Andrew says, “and this is the place for us.”

To the Rogen family the NWSS was not only a place to sell their bull, but also to make

connections and build a customer base with other producers attending the show. With 35 head of cattle, Andrew considers their operation to be smaller, but plans to continue to improve genetics and size. Recently their family started an embryo program with a cooperator herd.

“We don't have an annual production sale, so this is a great opportunity to market our cattle on a large scale,” Andrew says. “Last year we sold 20 bulls and five heifers through word of mouth and our showing exposure.”

Along with the exposure, another one of Andrew's favorite parts about the NWSS is being able to see friends from across the country and exhibit his family's cattle at such a high level of competition.

“I like being able to compare the quality of my cattle to those at the NWSS because it represents a national stage,” Andrew says. “I also like seeing all of my friends and catching up with everybody.”

One of Rogen's biggest rewards is to market a good bull calf from one of his past show heifers.

“[By using show heifers we bought] this is a great way to get some different genetics in our herd,” Andrew says. “It also allows us to use those genetics and create somewhat of a niche market.”

Andrew plans to take the money he and his family have earned through showing and selling his and Alex's cattle and put it toward college educations for both of them.

As far as the rest of their future, Andrew says his family plans to continue raising, showing and marketing their high-quality Angus cattle.

“We plan to continue our marketing plan by increasing our regional profile by selling high-quality cattle to the cattlemen of our area and our national profile by exhibiting cattle competitively at the highest levels.”

Seedstock marketing

As the Rogen brothers test their marketing abilities in the showing, another group set themselves apart in the historic Denver Union Stockyards. There, 10 Colorado State University (CSU) students get the opportunity to compete against some of the industry's best.

The CSU Seedstock Marketing Team was started in the 1999-2000 school year and continues to gain popularity with CSU students. CSU animal sciences professor and team coordinator Tom Field explains that the concept is to get the students out of the classroom and into the real world.

The idea for the team started with a student-run sale that began in 1976. But Field says students never had an opportunity to merchandise their cattle, and there was no year-round hands-on experience for the

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students. A few years later, a group of students proposed the idea of having a team that traveled and participated at different livestock shows across America. While that was not feasible, it got some of the faculty thinking of what could be done and the concept of the students merchandising their cattle.

It was decided that a seedstock marketing team would be formed — but not just anyone would qualify to be on this team. The current team is selected each spring through an interview process conducted by the team from the previous year. Once selected, the team is paired with their animals from weaning to sale.

Along with keeping and preparing the calves for the NWSS and the sale, the seedstock team is also responsible for coordinating one industry event. A popular choice has been to have a booth at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Trade Show. According to Field, a previous team was responsible for helping with the first-ever Angus Cattleman's Boot Camp.

Field says he tries to let the team work together on their own.

"I'm sure there are times that they wish we (the instructors) would give them more guidance," Field says. "But we let them do things, be creative, try some things, get out of the class and into the real world." He is also happy about the experiences they gain through working as a team, the opportunities they have to meet people through industry events such as NCBA and the NWSS, and the overall positive experience most have when being a part of the team.

Experiences and opportunities

Toby Pollock, a student at CSU and this year's team captain, said he found out about the team when his sister was on it while she



► While they don't have a large production sale, Andrew Rogen, Brandon, S.D., and his family are still able to market their cattle on a large scale at the National Western Angus Bull Sale.

was at CSU. When Pollock began school, he also began working on the CSU farm and said that a lot of the activities correlated. From there he went through the interview process and has enjoyed each aspect of it since, especially the NWSS experience.

"The experience in general has been great," Pollock says. "I have met people through this program that I would not have otherwise. I never would have been able to bring cattle to the stock show, or have the opportunities to go to some of the banquets and sales here in Denver."

Jennifer Workman of Fort Collins, Colo., got involved with the team a little differently. Workman is an agricultural journalism major who wanted to be on the team to learn more about the industry.

"The interview was pretty nerve-racking," Workman says. "Since I wasn't an animal science major, I was coming in without much experience."

But Workman made the team and brought her contributions with her. "Everyone brings in a different type of knowledge to this team. I bring in a marketing and promotion viewpoint."

Workman has enjoyed her time at the NWSS, saying that it's been memorable sitting out in the cold, and it's lots of fun out in the Yards.

According to Field, the NWSS is not just a great place to showcase the cattle, but also the students who work there. "I hope that when alumni walk past our pen, they feel a real sense of pride in their alma mater." AY

A virtual show

If you have not been able to attend the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) for the past three years, you still have had the opportunity to watch the show. That is thanks to Andrew Rogen of Brandon, S.D. It was Rogen's idea to put the show on the Internet for all to view.

"I got the idea after watching the Denim and Diamonds sale in Denver," Rogen says. "We had previously bought a calf from a sale on the phone; we couldn't see it, and it was pretty scary. When I saw liveauctions.tv at the sale in Denver, I thought that would be cool for the junior show."

Not only would it be cool, but it would also provide a way for Rogen's grandparents and other family, and many others who could not make the trips to Indiana, Oklahoma or Iowa, to watch the NJAS.

Rogen then contacted the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) and Livestock Auctions to ask what it would take to get them to the NJAS. It was the same set up that Livestock Auctions would use for a sale, and it received NJAA approval, so Rogen coordinated sponsorships and got everything set up for the 2006 NJAS in Indianapolis.

This year the American Angus Association co-sponsored with Marands Angus and Rogen Angus to get the NJAS broadcast to the



► Rogen runs the camera in between fitting and showing at the NJAS.

world. Rogen is still very proud of his accomplishments and the idea that started when his grandparents couldn't watch him show.