

## State Spotlight Series:

This is the second in a series of articles featuring the programs and services of some of the leading state Angus associations.

# Everyone Counts

**A** 65-year history of active, dedicated membership is one reason the Missouri Angus Association has the most members of all state Angus associations, almost 800 members in 2003. From farmers with one or two cows to those with several hundred registered Angus, a common thread among all state breeders is an association that takes pride in its long-term success.

“Success, strength and the long heritage of the association are due to the activities and the unselfish commitments of volunteer members, both in time and money, and being pulled together by Wayne ‘Doc’ Smith, [the former association fieldman] for 25 years,” Karen Jones says (see story on page 49).

It’s Smith’s philosophy — that every member counts — that has allowed all breeders to take part in the state organization. Missouri has 1,325 breeders who are members of the American Angus Association.

Jones’ operation, Jones & Gilliam Angus, manages 20-25 cows near Gainesville. Jones is the 2003-2004 president-elect, and she

If you have  
three Angus or  
300, you’re still  
important to the  
Missouri Angus  
Association.

by *Corinne Patterson*

remembers how her family got involved in the state association.

In 1983 her daughter Jackie had a bull that was noticed by a professional cattle fitter, who then took the bull to several shows. A friendship formed with the breeders in the show string their bull had joined, J.R. and Mark Herd of Fair Grove.

“Jones & Gilliam Angus joined the Missouri Angus Association in 1984, and Jackie sold her bull at the Missouri Angus Futurity in 1985,” Jones recalls. “We have been very active in the association ever since.”

## State facts

“Missourians are very fortunate to have their state located in the center of the United States, having very diversified types of land — from the very best cropland to the very rugged pasture and timberland,” Jones says. “It’s perfect for cow-calf and purebred operations, with feedlots in the four adjoining states.”

The state covers 69,709 square miles (sq. mi.) and recorded just more than 20,000 Angus registrations in 2003, second only to Montana. Missouri is considered the cow-calf state, with 2,180,000 beef cows in 2003, according to the Missouri Agricultural Statistics Service. While there are more than 2 million pairs in the state, only 28 Angus breeders register more than 100 animals each year, the American Angus Association reported in 2003. The average Missouri operation is about 20-30 cows, which is the national average reported by members of the Association.

Missouri has very little native rangeland, with much of the grasslands consisting of improved grasses like fescue, orchard grass and brome, says KC Olson, University of Missouri (MU) beef cattle specialist. It takes 4-15 acres to maintain a cow year-round, depending on management practices and soil quality, which varies across the state.

## Fun for all

“Our biggest challenge for the



► **Above:** On the last weekend in February, the Missouri Angus Association sponsors a futurity in Columbia where more than 125 bulls and females are shown. Breeders from across the state attend the event.

► **Right:** Wayne “Doc” Smith checks in cattle to be sold during the futurity. Missouri has a full-time fieldman, a position from which Smith retired in February 2004 after nearly 25 years of service.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BARBARA MCBRIDE

future may be to do an adequate job of both short- and long-range planning,” says John Moffitt, 2003-2004 Missouri Angus Association president. “Just as breeders visualize and plan for the phenotype and EPDs (expected progeny differences) in the production of their herds, the state association’s leadership will need to plan for their roles in how they can assist their membership.

“An Association, as with any organization that survives long term, must provide its membership, at the very least, a perception of value for its members’ investments of time or money,” he continues. “All breeders have to belong to the American Angus Association in order to register animals. State associations must offer breeders other benefits or reasons to participate.”

Moffitt says the Missouri association sponsors and supports several activities and events to keep both old and new members active. He is a longtime Angus breeder in Missouri, with his registered herd dating back to 1960. Youth, an important part of the association, are a big reason why his family has become more active in Missouri.

“Our family has gradually become more active with the state association over the past 13 years, with our three daughters participating in the junior programs,” Moffitt says. While assuming a leadership role was not planned, he says, “My wife and I have always tried not to be just ‘takers’ and believe you should give some back when the opportunity arises.”

The association coordinates the Missouri Angus Futurity Show and Sale in Columbia as its main event for the year. The members conduct the state’s annual meeting at this time, and juniors compete for the right to represent Missouri in the National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest.

Several shows are sponsored throughout the summer and fall show seasons. The association also sponsors several scholarships through the Missouri Angus Auxiliary and the Missouri Angus Foundation.

Youth have opportunities to vie for Missouri Angus Queen, Missouri Angus Princess and Missouri Angus Ambassador (see “Youth Ambassador” in the February 2004 *Angus Journal*).

Moffitt says meeting friends and expanding a customer base are benefits of being active in the state association.

“You don’t have to be active in the state



► Breeders from across Missouri and a few out-of-state guests participate in the Missouri Angus Tour. The event is hosted during the last week of August.



association to be successful, and it probably depends on your customer base,” Moffitt says. “However, you might do more business with the state membership if you are active. And, likewise, you may miss out on some good friendships if you are not active in the state association.”

### Let’s talk business

As a common feature in the state spotlight series, the *Angus Journal* questioned Jones, Smith and Moffitt on several ideas about the Missouri association’s past, present and future. These questions focus on the business nature of a state association and ways Missouri breeders approach business and leadership within their organization.

### Has membership in the Missouri Angus Association grown, gotten smaller or stayed the same throughout the years? Why?

Jones says membership has been volatile during the association’s tenure. Smith says today’s membership has gotten smaller, which he attributes to retirement of many lifetime members.

### What is the most successful program your state has developed to support its Angus breeders?

Smith says *Missouri Angus Trails*, the association’s magazine, has

been an important addition to the organization. It has allowed members to stay informed of Angus events and sales throughout the state. Other programs that he says have been successful include the Missouri Angus Tour, which is in its sixth year, and shows such as the Futurity Show and Sale and Preview Show have been successful.

A common thread among all interviewed is the strength of the junior program. Smith has been credited with putting forth a lot of effort to get youth involved. The Missouri Angus Auxiliary has also taken an active role in supporting youth throughout the state.

### How do you motivate producers to participate in the various programs you offer?

“Highly motivated producers is what is unique about the Missouri Angus Association,” Jones says. “Volunteers have always been able and willing to help successfully run each of our activities.”

The array of opportunities that the state association offers to its members allows for every interest to be considered. State leaders look for ways to include everyone. For example, young men can participate in the Angus Ambassador program while young ladies vie for the Angus queen role.

“All Angus breeders in the state of

“Volunteers have always been able and willing to help successfully run each of our activities.”

—Karen Jones

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Missouri should be active members,” Jones says. “Being members of our association gives the opportunity to meet and discuss all the different aspects of the livestock industry. It is very important for the youth for their involvement in scholarships and junior activities.”

### What is unique about your association?

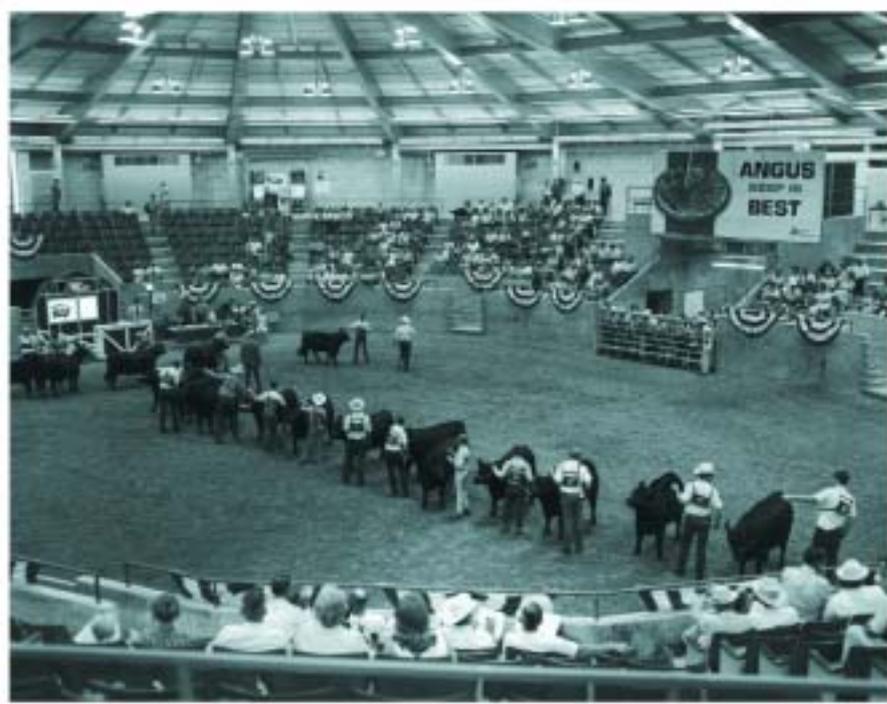
Smith says Missouri is unique in that it has a fulltime fieldman. In his role as fieldman, Smith was not only responsible for answering to the Board, he also was a ringman for many sales, attended Angus functions and events, worked with youth, planned state-sponsored events, and put out *Missouri Angus Trails*, just to name a few of his responsibilities.

Prior to working for the association, Smith was a veterinarian, which is where his nickname, Doc, originated. When Smith took the fieldman position in 1979, he turned his small veterinary clinic in the little town of Winigan into the new home of the Missouri Angus Association. His assistant, Joyce Reed, says the veterinary equipment found a new home in the back room, and Angus eventually overtook the front office.

### Change is inevitable over time. How will the association move forward with the retirement of Smith?

“Having someone as dedicated as Doc (Smith) has been very important. The association had no money when Doc first started, so he packed a lunch and slept in his Bronco,” Jones points out. “Doc’s unselfish dedication has held our association together the past 25 years.”

One thing for which Smith is given credit is treating all members equally, and that’s a character trait the Missouri Angus



► The first National Junior Angus Heifer Show was in conjunction with the National Conference in Columbia, Mo., in 1969. Youth play a major role in Missouri’s state association.

Association plans to keep in its fieldman position.

“We need a person who will treat all members equally, giving each member of the association the same amount of time, regardless the size of cattle operation,” Jones says.

### Where do you see your state association in the future? What role will it play for Missouri members?

“I hope it will remain a family-oriented association that provides activities for parents, grandparents and children of

Missouri Angus members and will continue to help build character and leadership in our juniors in the future as it has in the past,” Jones says. “Missouri Angus juniors have gone on to become doctors, lawyers, nurses, school teachers, etc., as well as successful full-time farmers and Angus breeders, but most importantly, leaders in their communities.”

### What are the biggest challenges facing state associations today? How do you try to overcome those challenges?

“State associations must adopt a sound financial plan. The biggest challenge facing state associations today is keeping the membership involved with activities and to make sure new, small-scale breeders have the same opportunities as the older, larger breeders,” Jones says.

“We try to meet the challenge by having a strong board of directors who represent their areas and who are involved in all the activities of the association and help foster and nurture a strong junior association and support their activities, as well as support for the Missouri Angus Auxiliary,” she continues. “We need to continue to look for new activities and services for our members. These activities and services must add benefit to all our membership.”

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