

# The Faces of the AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION

Ten men of vision have sat at the helm of the national Angus organization, helping lay the foundation of the American Angus Association we know today and what it will become in this millennium. We continue our look at the history of the Association by examining the tenures of Richard "Dick" Spader and John Crouch.

## PART 3 OF 3

BY KEITH EVANS & SHAUNA ROSE HERMEL

When C.K. Allen submitted his resignation to the American Angus Association Board of Directors in March 1981, there was no long search for a replacement. At that same meeting, the Board hired Richard "Dick" Spader as executive vice president, marking the second time in 98 years that a staff member was selected to be the face of the American Angus Association.

A native of Howard, S.D., Spader grew up on the family farm. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1962 through 1965 and joined the Association's public relations department in 1969 after graduating from South Dakota State University in Brookings with a major in animal science and a minor in journalism.

Spader was soon promoted to assistant director of public relations. In 1973 he was named assistant director of the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®) program. For a time he worked in both departments, helping issue the first national *Sire Evaluation Report* in 1974. In 1976 he became full-time director of performance programs. As head of the department, he issued the first *Pathfinder® Report* and the first estimated breeding values (EBVs).

Spader inherited an Association still suffering business declines. Budgeting to balance income and expenses while continuing to support essential programs like AHIR, advertising, junior activities and field services was a yearly exercise in tightrope walking.

*The American Angus Association turns 125 this fall. Recognition of the milestone will occur at various Angus events during the year. As part of the celebration, the Angus Journal will feature glimpses of the past throughout the year.*



In order to keep the regional manager force, Spader, at his first Board Meeting as executive vice president, asked for and received permission to gradually integrate *Angus Journal* advertising representatives and Association regional managers. This was accomplished within two years. Today, regional managers are supported equally by Angus Productions Inc. (API) and the Association.

Other less dramatic budget-saving programs were called for until fiscal year (FY) 1987. That year the Association ended a 19-year decline in registrations and began a sustained period of growth.

It was during the 1980s that the Angus "performance movement" became generally accepted by Association members. Within a few years it was widely used by commercial bull customers.

The effort was aided by John Crouch,

who replaced Spader as director of performance programs. The two men worked together to promote the performance concept. Three milestones marked the revolution that took place in Angus performance during Spader's tenure as executive vice president.

First was the field data *Sire Evaluation Report* issued initially in 1980. It meant that bulls no longer had to be enrolled in an expensive and time-consuming structured breeding program in order to establish expected progeny differences (EPDs). Suddenly these valuable breeding and marketing tools were being calculated on a much wider and less-expensive scale.

Second was the development of nonparent EPDs. With this program it was possible to calculate EPDs on young bulls and females that had not yet produced progeny. It opened the door for registered breeders to begin selecting young replacement females on EPD performance. Probably more important, it allowed commercial cow herd owners to use EPDs instead of ratios when selecting bulls.

Having EPDs on young bulls, producers could compare bulls from different herds in different parts of the country and make more accurate buying and breeding decisions. About this same time, the Board approved replacing the standard pedigree with performance pedigrees on every registration certificate.

Development of ultrasound to evaluate progeny for carcass quality was the third

## ASSOCIATION TIME LINE



1981	1985	1986	1988	1991	1991
C.K. Allen resigned; Board promoted Richard Spader	First <i>Angus Beef Bulletin®</i> published	Registrations bottomed out at 133,475	Registrations hit 252,969	AIMS Department created as AHMS, Angus Herd Management System	Long-range planning began



milestone. This program has allowed breeders to dramatically improve carcass quality genetics in Angus cattle. For comparison, from the beginning of the first structured Sire Evaluation Program through fall 2001, just more than 60,000 progeny had been harvested and evaluated for carcass merit. In fiscal year (FY) 2001 alone, 68,662 animals were scanned.

In FY 2000, the Association completed the first merge of Canadian and U.S. Angus performance data for National Cattle Evaluation (NCE).

In the 1980s the Certified Angus Beef (CAB) Program helped change the way people thought about beef cattle production. Before the program captured the attention of the industry, it was generally accepted that high-quality beef was a luxury that neither consumers nor producers could afford. Some argued that, to survive, the beef industry needed to produce the lowest-quality beef still acceptable to consumers. That kind of talk changed in the late 1980s.

In 1982, sales of *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) product totaled 470,000 pounds (lb.). The next year, however, sales exploded to 3.2 million lb., then 8.3 million lb. the next year. In 2000 and 2001, annual sales topped 500 million lb.

The junior activities program developed into a much larger vehicle for growth during Spader's tenure. Emphasis on leadership development involved more Angus youth and helped stimulate growth in other areas of junior activities. The annual Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) Conference, with its emphasis on industry issues and leadership development, became a youth favorite.

Growth in the number of active National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members reached 11,854 in 2001. From 1981 to 2001 the number of cattle shown at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) increased from 598 to 981, with the number of exhibitors nearly doubling. Participation in the event increased dramatically with the addition of



### RICHARD SPADER

- 1981-2001
- Integrated *Angus Journal*® ad reps with Association regional managers.
- Performance movement became generally accepted.
- Nonparent EPDs were developed.
- Began issuing performance pedigrees on all animals.
- Development of ultrasound to evaluate progeny for carcass quality.
- *Certified Angus Beef*® sales surpassed 500 million lb.
- National Junior Angus Association membership reached 11,000.
- Angus Foundation net assets reached \$1 million.
- Created and expanded circulation and content of the *Angus Beef Bulletin*®.
- Board adopted long-range plan.

other contests and events made part of the national event.

Established in 1980 to support youth, education and research, the Angus Foundation had amassed net assets of more

than \$1 million by fall 2001, thanks to generous contributions from Angus enthusiasts. The Foundation supports many junior educational projects and activities, especially the work of the NJAA Board of Directors. In 2001, the Foundation distributed \$25,000 in scholarships to Angus youth.

Communications were a priority for Spader, who fostered an emphasis on communicating with commercial customers. The *Angus Beef Bulletin*®, distributed to commercial cattle producers using registered Angus bulls, was expanded and improved. More than 70,000 commercial producers received the tabloid-sized publication, which was completely supported by advertising revenue.




In 1984 the "elephant" ads produced by the Association changed the way people thought about cattle breeding. They dramatized the futility of selecting beef cattle for mature size alone. The positive message presented by the ads was that, by using Angus with desirable EPDs for milk, growth and carcass quality, commercial producers could exercise more control over their herds and over the price they received for feeder cattle. The ads were followed by campaigns that continued to emphasize the extra value the industry places on well-bred, predictable Angus cattle.

Long-range Association planning was initiated by Spader in 1991 and again in 2000. These sessions provided the Board, with the help of the staff, opportunity to evaluate Association activities and look at future needs.

During its long-range planning in 2000, the Board established a new mission statement, a new vision statement and 13 goals that were to serve as marching orders for staff and committees in ensuing years.

With its vision to be the leading and most progressive member-driven, consumer-focused beef organization in the world, the Association established as its mission "to

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1997	1998	1998	1998	1999	1999
NJAA membership stabilized at more than 10,000	Building expansion for the <i>Angus Journal</i> ®	Commercial Relations Department created	Expanded the role of the <i>Angus Beef Bulletin</i> , increasing circulation to more than 62,000	First ultrasound evaluations for carcass quality published	Louis "Mick" Colvin retires from CAB; Jim Reimann hired as executive director
					

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provide programs, services, technology and leadership to enhance the genetics of the Angus breed, broaden its influence within the beef industry and expand the market for superior-tasting, high-quality Angus beef worldwide.”

Goals ranged from becoming the leading information and service center in the industry to incorporating DNA technology into genetic evaluation, to enrolling 1 million head of commercial cows in Angus Beef Records Service (BRS).

What invigorated the staff and Board, others viewed with mixed emotions. Some breed organizations, finding it harder to survive on their own, saw an opportunity to partner with the Association and petitioned the Association to conduct their performance evaluations. When the Association began to discuss doing genetic evaluations for Angus-derivative cattle, some members dug in their heels to say no.

Spader died Oct. 13, 2001, before the issue was resolved.

The Angus industry was turned upside down by Spader’s unexpected death. Crouch was immediately appointed the interim executive vice president and guided the Angus community through one of its most heart-wrenching periods.

With members unsettled over the derivative issue, the Board thought it best to open the search to candidates outside the organization. After a thorough review process, Crouch was confirmed the best man to lead the Association. He was officially appointed to the position at the February 2002 Board Meeting.

### A man of substance

It was the performance push that first attracted Crouch to join the Association staff. The Tennessee native grew up on a registered Angus farm near Jonesborough. He received a bachelor’s degree in animal

husbandry from the University of Tennessee–Knoxville in 1963.

His early involvement in the purebred industry relied on the showing for evaluation and marketing. Experience gained in managing a commercial herd, where income from cows was expected to make the farm payment, helped him see that profit was a matter of pounds and the inputs it took to generate them.

Crouch accepted a position as regional manager for Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas in March 1974. After seeing the difference records could make among herds in his territory, he became enamored with performance and welcomed the opportunity to move to Saint Joseph, Mo., as director of performance programs in 1981.

From inclusion of birth weights in AHIR to electronic submission of data to fostering the research and adoption of ultrasound-derived carcass EPDs, Crouch has been at the forefront of breed improvement programs in the beef industry.

Through the use of EPDs, Angus breeders were able to increase the growth and performance of the breed — shedding its stereotype of small and early-maturing — while maintaining its position as *the* calving-ease leader. Commercial cattlemen recognized the Angus cow for her maternal value. The CAB brand was successful in generating premiums for Angus cattle, capitalizing on the breed’s ability to grow rapidly to a point of harvest, and its inherent ability to marble.

This foundation of substance helped to steady the Association as Crouch took the reins in 2002. In 2003, he organized a strategic planning session for the Board to assess the Association’s strengths and weaknesses, as well as its role in the industry. In a sense, the session’s objective was to get everyone on the same page. Reviewing the mission and goals established in 2000, the

Board narrowed the focus to five core strategies: achieve Angus excellence through information; increase beef demand with Angus equity; identify and implement relevant technologies; optimize resources; and create opportunities.

In a follow-up session with the staff and regional managers, objectives were listed, benefits were prioritized, barriers and required resources for success were identified, and assignments were made. Where success often dulls innovation, Crouch has encouraged the Board, staff and membership of the Association to avoid complacency and continue to innovate.

The Board launched a major review of the Association’s Charter & Bylaws. A much-needed modernization was adopted at the November 2004 Annual Meeting.

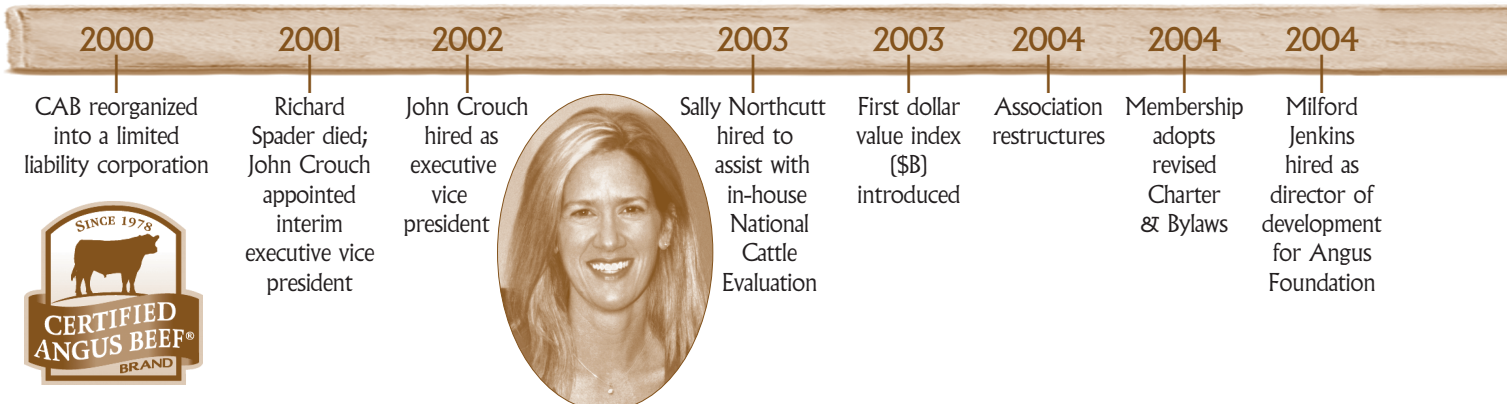
The Association administration was restructured in 2004. Three vice presidents were named.

Crouch prioritized communication with members and commercial producers and strengthened partnerships with university personnel through forums such as Angus Boot Camps, Outreach Seminars and informational programs at Angus events. These forums helped inform attendees of the beef industry’s changing competitive environment and how the Association was working to equip members to compete.

The introduction of dollar value indexes (\$Values), calving ease EPDs, a temperament research evaluation, heifer pregnancy EPDs and research into feed efficiency and marker-assisted selection, demonstrate the priority still given to advancing breed improvement.

Crouch’s untiring and unyielding dedication has for the last six years been commandeered to bolster other departments and entities as well. One of his strengths has been his ability to fill positions with good leaders, to help them do their jobs, and to help them work together.

The Angus Foundation has received greater priority during Crouch’s tenure. Milford Jenkins was hired as director of



development in May 2004 and was promoted to president of the 501(c)(3) not-for-profit affiliate in 2006.

The Foundation launched its first capital campaign, Vision of Value: Campaign for Angus, in 2006 with the goal of raising \$11 million by Dec. 31, 2011. A leadership cabinet was established to help reach that ambitious goal. It is well on its way to achieving that goal, with more than \$4.3 million received in outright gifts, pledges and planned giving commitments.

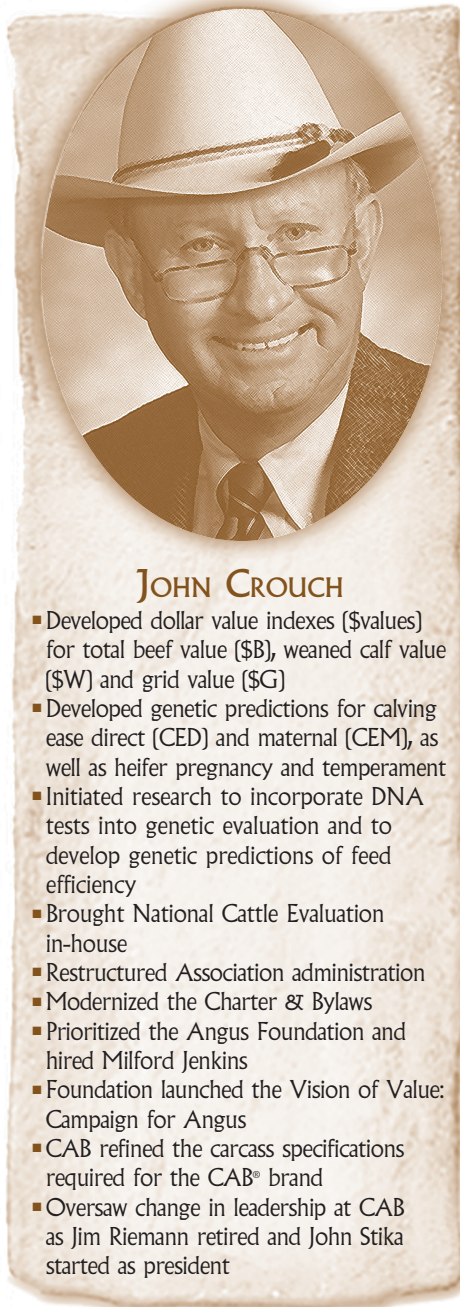
A net worth now exceeding \$5.4 million has allowed the Foundation to expand its support of education, research and youth initiatives. It now annually offers in excess of \$150,000 in graduate and undergraduate scholarships. Education and research efforts range from financially supporting educational outreach efforts to funding research critical to the future of the breed.

Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI) was launched in 2007 under the direction of Bill Bowman. While universities are reducing their commitment to conducting genetic evaluations, AGI now offers a data analysis service to the industry.

CAB has withstood the loss of export markets to Japan and other countries due to the "cow that stole Christmas"; has refined its original specifications to better meet customer needs and ensure supply of CAB product; and transitioned leadership to John Stika, who now serves as president, following the retirement of Jim Riemann.

CAB has prioritized producer communications and has worked in closer alliance with the Association to communicate how producers can maximize CAB acceptance and earn premiums for quality cattle. In 2006 CAB eligibility was expanded to include AngusSource®-tagged cattle.

CAB brand Prime and CAB brand Natural have broadened the brand's appeal. A record 2.16 million head of cattle attained CAB status in FY 2007, and 13,500 licensed partners sold 583 million lb. of CAB brand product.



### JOHN CROUCH

- Developed dollar value indexes (\$values) for total beef value (\$B), weaned calf value (\$W) and grid value (\$G)
- Developed genetic predictions for calving ease direct (CED) and maternal (CEM), as well as heifer pregnancy and temperament
- Initiated research to incorporate DNA tests into genetic evaluation and to develop genetic predictions of feed efficiency
- Brought National Cattle Evaluation in-house
- Restructured Association administration
- Modernized the Charter & Bylaws
- Prioritized the Angus Foundation and hired Milford Jenkins
- Foundation launched the Vision of Value: Campaign for Angus
- CAB refined the carcass specifications required for the CAB® brand
- Oversaw change in leadership at CAB as Jim Riemann retired and John Stika started as president

Angus Productions Inc. (API) has expanded its services as the Association's publishing arm, including the addition of a Web Services Department and a Creative

Media Department. The *Angus Journal* continues to be a popular marketing and information vehicle for members. The *Angus Beef Bulletin* is currently distributed to more than 97,000 commercial cattlemen and is growing in popularity both as a marketing vehicle and an information source.

With paper costs surging and Internet access becoming more standard, API is strengthening its electronic media efforts with an electronic newsletter and online information and marketing services.

The Special Services Department continues to set records with the number of sale books, postcards and brochures it produces for members. In June 2007, API launched its Creative Media Department, providing editorial and public relations efforts for hire to Angus members and industry.

Under Crouch's tenure, the American Angus Association has experienced unprecedented growth. With nearly 35,000 active members, registrations have grown to 347,755 and transfers reached 204,918 in FY 2007. The consolidated net assets of the Association, its subsidiaries and affiliate have grown from just shy of \$16 million at the end of FY 2001 to \$29 million in FY 2007.

In 2007, Crouch's title was changed to chief executive officer to better reflect the responsibilities of the position.

In 2008 the Association celebrates its 125th year. It stands as the largest, most influential beef breed association in the world. Angus genetics are not only the standard in the United States, but they are the standard in virtually every country where Angus cattle are produced. Credit for this must go to the membership and to the officers and directors the members have elected to run the Association.

Officers and directors come and go, but the executive officers they put in charge of the Association have provided continuity, leadership and professional support to the largest beef breed association in the world.



2005	2005	2006	2006	2007	2007	2008
CED and CEM added to portfolio of EPDs; \$W and \$EN introduced	AngusSource® approved as a USDA Process Verified Program	Launched Angus Foundation Vision of Value: Campaign for Angus	CAB approved alternative specifications for CAB carcass qualifications	CAB President Jim Riemann retired; John Stika promoted to the position	Creation of Angus Genetics Inc.	John Crouch announces retirement