

On the Front Lines

Regional Manager Jeff Mafi honored by Oklahoma Angus Association.

by Katy Holdener, American Angus Association

As an American Angus Association regional manager, you're required to wear a lot of hats. From representing the programs of the Association and Angus Genetics Inc. to selling advertisements in the *Angus Journal* and *Angus Beef Bulletin*, 13 knowledgeable men proudly serve as regional managers. While most days you'll find them in cowboy hats, regional managers are known to wear many when serving the diverse American Angus Association membership.

Oklahoma native and Region 8 Regional Manager Jeff Mafi was recently awarded the honor of Mr. Angus from the Oklahoma Angus Association due to his unwavering dedication to serving Angus breeders in his territory.

"Within the Association and the entities, you have to wear each of the entity hats every day," Mafi said. "Our membership will ask you questions about everything that goes on inside the Association as they take advantage of the programs we continue to offer to enhance the value of their genetics."

Mafi's career in the beef industry started long before his role as regional manager. After graduating from Oklahoma State University (OSU) with a master's degree in meat



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science, he moved north to work with David Hawkins and Harlan Ritchie at Michigan State University. There, he spent five years on the teaching staff before moving back to his *alma mater* to manage the OSU Purebred Beef Center (PBC).

As the manager of the PBC, Mafi was in charge of the day-to-day management of the primarily Angus cow herd, structuring breeding decisions and marketing initiatives for the program. He also oversaw the students on staff, as well as the production of the Cowboy Classic bull and female sale hosted every April.

Mafi spent eight years with OSU and still resides west of Stillwater. His wife, Gretchen, is a professor at OSU, where she teaches undergraduate- and graduate-level meat science classes and also coaches the meat judging team.

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"Every member is different, and their operations are different," Mafi said. "With that, their expectations are different. As regional managers,

we serve on the front lines and get the first phone call when something changes in the industry or in the Association."

Regional managers adapt to each member's needs and are charged with relaying the message from the Association to breeders within their respective territories. Each member utilizes their regional manager differently, he said. It's not an easy task, but he acclimates to meet each member's needs.

As changes in the industry and the Association occur, Mafi is quick to answer questions and respond with knowledgeable answers. He provides steadfast responses and valuable knowledge to the members in his territory, along with their commercial customers.

"One of the most exciting parts

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about this role is working with the people involved in the commercial cattle business,” Mafi said. “They call, text and email about sire groups or specific individuals that are in upcoming sales. It’s just part of what we do each day, connecting the commercial user to Angus genetics. Those people are adding value to the Angus seedstock business and their cow herd

simultaneously, with genetics that our members are producing.”

Aside from attending more than 100 sales in the fall and spring seasons, Mafi makes herd visits, attends Kansas and Oklahoma Angus Association meetings, and assists with junior activities and seminars. Last year alone, he put



close to 44,000 miles on his vehicle.

Regional managers truly serve as the connection between the Association and its membership, as they are often the first line of communication for producers. Between educating members on new programs or services and lending a hand outside the sale

arena, they are the faces of the Association — day in and day out.

Mafi’s willingness to support and serve members of all ages and all regions is just one of the many reasons he was chosen for the Mr. Angus award by the Oklahoma Angus Association.

“Mr. Angus is a very special award to receive from the Oklahoma Angus

Association,” Mafi said. “This type of recognition is very humbling both professionally and personally. I think any time you’re recognized by your peers, it’s extremely rewarding.” **AJ**

Editor’s Note: Katy Holdener is the digital content manager for the American Angus Association.