



CORE PRIORITIES

What They Are and Why They Are Important

1

MAINTAIN breed registry

By David Sample, Quebec



I chose breed registry as my topic because at a very young age, I always liked to look at registrations and keep track of our purebred cattle. Today our entire herd is made up of registered Angus females. My thought is that registration papers were an excellent way to track cow families and bulls from the past that we had used; they were a genetic map of what we had been breeding for the last 61 years.

Maintaining that history and the breed registry is important for the breed. We transfer all our bulls to our commercial clients giving them all the information about the genetics or the cow families behind their recent purchases. Providing the bull's complete history shows confidence that the genetics that you are selling are what you claim they are, providing assurance and peace of mind to the customer.

I know not all cattle producers find value in the pedigree but for purebred Angus producers it is an absolute necessity in their farm or ranch management.

2

ENSURE breed purity

By Blake Morton, Alberta



One of the core priorities that our membership identified as important is for the Canadian Angus Association to ensure breed purity. CAA has developed programs and policies that support this priority.

Parent verification is done through DNA testing. DNA is more accurate than blood typing which is no longer used. The DNA test is based on a direct comparison of the genetic markers of the parents and offspring. Since January 1, 2019, the CAA has required that every sire must be parent verified to both his sire and dam before his calves can be registered. In 2022, 18,035 animals were parent verified. This testing has found a small number of animals since its inception that do not qualify.

Spot testing is also another way the Association has maintained breed purity. Every year the CAA sent out about 500 requests for spot tests. One

in every 400 registered animals was required to be tested. A very small number of these spot tests revealed a discrepancy. Of the 58,000 registered Angus animals in Canada, the CAA is finding such a small number issues through spot tests that at the Fall 2023 Board of Directors meeting, the Board voted to suspend the spot test program immediately. The CAA office will monitor failed parentage test results until the end of 2024, and at that time the suspension of the program will be re-evaluated. The board felt that with the increase in the number of members using Angus GS testing and the parent verification policy that spot testing is no longer required. The Canadian Angus Association already has the most stringent testing requirements in the global industry.

You can find more information about DNA testing on the Canadian Angus Association website at www.cdnangus.ca/adding-value/dna-test-requests



SUSTAIN for the long-term

By Darren Ippolito, Saskatchewan



Sustainability is a buzz word in agriculture these days. It garners emotional momentum as you think of generational transfers of farms or businesses. Your Association is going through the same excitement and reservations that each of our members feel in their personal/business lives. The ability for an entity to survive and flourish is three-fold: adaptation, growth and discipline. Your CAA is committed to all three.

Firstly, adaptation. We must see the potholes ahead and either dodge them or do our best to mitigate the damage. We examine issues such as the aging demographic of cattle owners, the resource and labour-intensive nature of cow-calf production and the issue of regional situations of drought, urbanization or staff shortages. The CAA is fully committed to streamlining the registration process, making more time to do physical livestock work instead of office work. The board of directors discusses the labour shortages and how or if we can play a role in the solution ad nauseam. And finally, the solution to aging livestock owners is a high priority and is part of our growth strategy.

The growth strategy is simple: retain our producers and grow our youth/junior sector. The only way to grow is to show a positive outlook for our members: market share, livestock value, consumer confidence and industry recognition of our strengths and our brand. Each junior has the opportunity to become both

a member and a partner in our success. Even if he or she decides to become a professional outside of agriculture, their value is knowing and understanding the benefits of our product and how it can positively impact the lives of consumers who do not have a connection to the agriculture industry. The fact that our older members are leaving the industry isn't shocking; every industry experiences this. However, what we cannot afford is having breeders leave the CAA but not the industry because they feel there is no advantage to registering or participating in our programs. We need to listen and show them the value of the CAA, essentially adapting to their needs without ignoring the directive of the majority.

Finally, and for some most importantly, discipline. We must live within our means; be fiscally prudent as well as budget conscious. The fine line between functional and lavish must be walked. Your CAA needs to be visible but not viewed as opulent. Our long-term reserves must be cared for, as well as objectively looking at our long-term debts. A healthy balance sheet will do an enormous amount in navigating any rough waters ahead.

Sustainability for your CAA will be built on the three pillars of adaptability, positive growth and financial discipline. As with any three-legged stool, if one leg fails, the entire stool collapses. The members and frankly the Canadian cattle industry cannot have that happen. Your Board is fully committed to not letting it happen either.

4 DEFINE rules and policies

By Greg Pugh, Alberta



The definition of rules and policies is a literal one. The board of directors stays current on rules that affect the Association and in turn the membership. We work to incorporate these rules to stay in compliance with industry authorities and serve the membership's best interests. For example, rules that are put forward by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) are incorporated into policies for the Association. We also work on creating policy that is requested by the membership to better serve their needs. We flesh out these policies through tools like the member survey to get feedback on what would be of greater interest or needed by the membership.

5 PROTECT

By Graham McLean, Ontario



CAA takes our data and member data very seriously, both animal and personal information. Database security will become increasingly more important as cybercrimes continue to increase. Keeping up with the latest firewalls and frequent software updates to protect our data and information is crucial to protect our members. A potential breach of information is a serious issue which CAA keeps on top of every day. Our industry partners expect the highest security of us just as we expect the highest security from them.

Data sharing is always an interesting topic and discussion point. Members own their data and CAA does not share it. As we evolve our computer systems and are able

to incorporate the individual data points to generalize groups where there is not an association with individual members' data, sharing could be allowed. I believe sharing general group data would help us move to the next level in moving our genetic base to better efficiencies and breed improvement.

Protection of the Angus brand is imperative to the success of CAA and our members. The easier it is to do business with CAA the better, which makes the data possibly more vulnerable to attacks. The mobile phone is the first choice for many of our members so as we add more apps, the security is just as crucial to maintain leading-edge technology. We at CAA take the protection of your data very seriously!

6 DEVELOP tools

By Robbie Garner, Saskatchewan

The Canadian Angus Association has been a leader in developing tools that our members have the option to utilize for their breeding and selection decisions and marketing goals. As time has progressed and the use of performance data such as EPDs and genomic technology has increased, the CAA has continued to conduct research and develop



these economically important tools. The "tools" that are available for the membership are not only on the scientific side, the CAA has continued to work on herd management that can potentially save time and create efficiency in data entry. The release of the calving book app has been a successful addition to on-farm calving information entry and animal registration. The new Verified Angus Program assists producers in marketing their verified Angus cattle, an expansion of the already highly successful Canadian Angus (green) Tag Program.

The tools that the CAA has continued to research, develop, and bring to the membership would not be possible without the leadership shown by our past directors. The Canadian Angus Association is the only Canadian beef breed association that has a staff position focused on research and development of programs that has allowed the CAA to work with many industry partners. Much of this research and development of these tools not only benefits our Angus members and producers, but also other areas of our beef industry.

We have been very fortunate to be able to utilize the various tools developed and brought forward by the CAA. The membership has the ability to choose which ones they will implement into their breeding programs.

7 COMMUNICATE

By BJ Schierlinck, Alberta

As I sit down to write this, so many things come to mind on what communication is and the importance of it. To me, it is exchanging information to help everyone around be up to speed with what is going on. From a CAA standpoint it is important to have as much communication as we can possibly have to inform, update or educate our membership. The value of great communication is a major driver in having a fantastic Association. Imagine not being up to speed on the latest industry news, markets, and agriculture updates that can affect our programs. This is very key information to all of us.

CAA has done a great job trying to cover all of the bases when it comes to communication including the website, Angus Life and social media. The website allows people to look up information at their convenience, including data and other industry articles. Angus Life is put out once a year, with all the highlights and upcoming events, deadlines, etc. and has been a great help to many. Social media has become the new favourite for most and I feel this is a fast way to get information out to anyone. We also have Angus Ambassadors, field staff and advisors that are key communicators in spreading up-to-date information on our breed and industry, to not only our membership but to all cattlemen in general.

Communication is a huge part of the industry, Association, and our operations! Over the last several years there are so many more ways to spread information efficiently and I feel these platforms really help keep us all well informed and I look forward to new and emerging ways to keep the lines of communication open between the Association, our membership and industry.



8 DIVERSIFY our revenue

By Tom deWaal, BC



It is a pleasure to be asked to write about something that I feel is very important. Years ago, when the Canadian Angus Association developed a strategic plan, it was done to have a long-term direction of where our Association is going. When we look at the strategic plan, we can all pick things out that are very important to us. For me, without diversifying our revenue streams there is no way that we can continue to deliver programs for our members at an affordable price. I have always said that profit is not a dirty word and I believe that we have to explore new business models for our members such as advertising, management tags, the Verified Angus program or Genuine Angus. All of these programs are important, and they might not work for every member, but that does not exclude the fact that they are important by allowing us to explore opportunities and new revenue streams. We can offer these programs at an affordable price and it then becomes our members' decision whether they want to participate in the programs or not.

I believe going forward we will see the rollout of many new programs that might not work for everyone, but I can assure you that your board of directors will be very mindful of the costs and that you will have a choice about participating in these programs.

If there is a program that you are using and it is beneficial to you (and you can make money from it), please let us know. I do not have to ask anyone if they do not like a program because generally, we will hear about that right away, but if there is something that works and makes you profitable, we definitely want to know. We want to continue to deliver programs at an affordable cost. The board is very aware that many regions of Canada have been impacted by severe weather conditions like drought, flooding and forest fires and those situations are only one reason that we want to remain sensitive to costs. All programs need to be able to hold their own financially in order to be successful.

9 ENHANCE the brand

By Roger Reynolds,
Saskatchewan



When I looked into the subject of how we as Canadian Angus Association members can enhance the brand, I felt we first need to consider what has been effective in elevating the Angus brand to its current position.

Opinions will vary on what has been the most influential factor in enhancing the brand to where we are today. While there have been numerous influencing factors, here are a couple of the main ones.

The Angus cow is herself the largest factor for breeders. She is efficient in good conditions or poor. The ability to raise a quality calf year after year speaks volumes in enhancing the Angus breed. The desired ability to improve a crossbred is also a great quality.

The Certified Angus Beef (CAB) program has been, in my opinion, one of the biggest factors in creating awareness of Angus beef. The consumer has been positively influenced toward CAB. Whether buying beef at the supermarket or ordering that quality steak in the restaurant of choice, the consumer recognizes, and looks for, CAB as a symbol of quality.

One of the most important and often overlooked elements of our business as Angus breeders is to enhance our own brand. We all strive to improve the quality of our herd. Raising a product that you are proud of and creating awareness that your product is a part of the Angus brand will certainly add value. If you don't promote your product yourself, why would you expect someone else to do it for you? What I mean by that is that it is up to all of us as Angus breeders to promote our breed. Every chance you get to promote the Angus brand, do it.

Promotion to all levels of consumers, commercial breeders and feedlot operators should be done by all of us. Continually expanding relationships which are beneficial to our brand is a non-stop activity. As an Association, going forward enhancing the brand will continue to be a priority.

Reaching the position as the top breed was a difficult task, but staying at the top will be extremely difficult.

10 PROVIDE opportunity for all members

By Dallas Johnston,
Manitoba



Providing opportunities for all members, big or small, is key to the success of the Association. When our members have success in marketing their genetics to the purebred and perhaps more importantly, the commercial producer, that goes a long way towards the success of the Association and Angus breed.

In the promotion of the breed, the focus needs to reflect the strength of the cattle from the farm right to the plate or beef consumers by starting out with a bull that calves easy and with his calves having the ability to grow at a good rate and finish with a product that is beneficial to the packing industry and ultimately the consumer.

Promotion of our product is looked after provided the animal satisfies those requirements; a strong product is the best form of promotion. As a leader in the beef industry, it is very important we continue to provide support and guidance to our producers both purebred and commercial. We need to continue to provide this leadership and guidance to the youth, again both purebred and commercial, so that the younger generation know they can count on us as a leader moving forward.

11

INVENT technological advancements

By Mona Howe, Alberta



As the industry-leading breed association in the country, the Canadian Angus Association has and continues to innovate and add value not only to the Angus breed but to the beef industry as a whole through the research and development of practical technological advancements.

One of the latest and most popular innovations from 2023 has been the Canadian Angus Calving Book App for Apple and Android devices. Using technology in this way to create efficiencies for our members has proven advantageous for data collection and registration purposes at the on-farm level and is also making the registration process easier and more efficient at the office staff level. The positive feedback and large uptake from the membership indicates the app has been a welcome addition to their operation. Interest in access to the app from outside the CAA membership is also a testament to the usefulness of this well-developed tool. I myself entered every purebred and commercial calf born here at Mo Angus. It was simple to add the calf information to the app on the go and convenient to have it to refer back to at a moment's notice.

The top three perks I found were:

- no book to lose or keep dry
- no pen to keep working and keep track of
- data was backed up instantly

Bovine Expert Tracking and Surveillance, better known as BETSY, is another tool CAA and OneCup AI have collaborated on to propel the breed forward. BESTY is a 3-D camera set up that is initially being utilized to provide unbiased feet and udder scores improving the accuracy of EPD data related to these traits. This tool allows data to be collected in ways not previously possible, eliminating discrepancies in human judgement on said traits and reducing the amount of labour required to obtain and analyse information relevant to breeders. In addition to that, BETSY's capabilities for identifying individual animals and changes in that animal's behavior may prove to be very useful to cattle producers for things such as calving alerts, estrus detection and many others.

Investing in the creation of technologically advanced yet practical tools like these is just one more important way for CAA to provide value to our members as we lead our industry into the future.

12

FOSTER the next generation

By Ronnie Ford, Maritimes

Youth are our future! I think by investing in Canadian Junior Angus (CJA), we are helping to shape Angus enthusiasts. CJA programs are very important to the development of youth and learning tools for the future. Engaging youth in Canadian Junior Angus events helps them develop friendships with other peers and shape them for the future. I think by giving them opportunities to engage in programs, it helps to give them an interest in different aspects of the industry. I don't expect everyone will be farmers but hopefully they will be involved in some part of the Angus breed. I think the junior program provides great opportunities to develop leadership skills in addition to travel and education scholarships to help support

their studies. The members who have received bursaries to travel to Showdown, GOAL (Guiding Outstanding Angus Leaders) Conference and heifer vouchers are incentives to help juniors start an Angus herd. Junior members who take interest in the Angus breed and attend events have the potential to be future Angus breeders. I have talked with past junior members who have supported the junior association and want to help give back to the program that has done so much for them.

