

Board of Directors September 2008

As I visit with you in late September, the Angus breed is in a fluid state because of Curley Calf Syndrome (CCS). The Association, working with breeders across the country, has notified you of CCS as quickly as possible utilizing both web based information and a direct mailing. There is compelling evidence this is a genetic disorder, although, as I compose this information, the scientists working on the problem have not officially classified this condition as a genetic defect. Rather than wait for the final declaration, the decision was made to make the membership aware that this condition exists. This notification would not be possible without the cooperation of Angus breeders helping to investigate this situation.

When this information is read, I am confident that more facts will be available to our membership because this is an evolving situation. For the most current information, please visit the American Angus Association's website. When developments occur in this quest for answers, they will be posted on the website. It is the intent of the Association and the Board to share additional new information as quickly as possible. The purpose of providing this information is to allow you, as breeders of Angus cattle, to have the most current information on which to make your decisions.

If this condition is identified as a genetic defect, the resources of the Association are committed to developing a method to allow you to identify which animals within our population are free of this trait and which animals carry the trait within their genetic makeup. These are challenging times; I encourage each of you to gather all available information before making decisions. To put this situation in perspective, with the development of DNA technology, this will not be the last time we are faced with eliminating a defective gene from our population. I believe what we learn from this process will allow us to be more effective in identifying and eliminating undesirable genes in the future.

On a much more pleasurable note, in late August, Robin and I had the privilege of attending the Angus Foundation event hosted by Express Ranches in Oklahoma City. Our own Betsy Michaels served on the planning committee for this "Old West Magic" event, which was a tribute to our ranching heritage. When the dust settled on the evenings festivities over \$340,000 had been raised for the Foundation. These contributions were made by a cross section of our membership; small breeders, large breeders, new breeders, multi-generational breeders, commercial breeders, and allied industries all contributed to this success. This event was enjoyable and productive.

The thirtieth anniversary of Certified Angus Beef (CAB) was celebrated this year in Idaho at the CAB Annual Conference. Over 500 folks gathered to discuss how the CAB program could be utilized to accomplish even greater heights. Announced at this gathering was the fact that CAB sold more than 610 million pounds of product this year, an all time high for the program. This conference is attended by the individuals that market our end product, whether it is retail, food service, international or value added products. These individuals are very interested in the stories of how quality Angus beef is produced. It is this demand for quality beef that untimely drives the demand for Angus cattle.

If you have concerns about how the American Angus Association is progressing, or if you would just like to visit about Angus, do not hesitate to call. If I can be of assistance, let me know.

Joe K. Hampton