



Marketing Update



CERTIFIED RED ANGUS

Pro-Cow

by Blake Angell, Commercial Marketing Director and Greg Comstock, RAAA Marketing Programs Coordinator

Meyer Provides Cash Premium For Certified Calves



The Meyer Natural Angus (MNA) program continues to enjoy increased demand from the consuming public, and 2006 is off to another very strong start. As the industry prepares to begin forward contracting calves and feeder cattle for late summer and fall delivery, MNA is aggressively seeking to expand the numbers of Certified Red Angus cattle that supply their branded beef product. Because Red Angus cattle have worked so well in the MNA program, the Meyer folks have introduced a cash premium specifically for producers of Certified Red Angus cattle which are purchased by MNA.

Tag Equals Real Dollars

MNA purchases cattle for their program in a number of different ways. Feeders may be purchased as calves, preferably weaned and vaccinated, or as backgrounded calves or yearlings. MNA also purchases finished cattle on either a "cash" or "Grid" basis. To help fulfill their desire for more Red Angus, MNA has established a cash premium basis for Certified and tagged cattle which reflects their program's outstanding procurement flexibility. Starting with cattle purchased after May 1st, a cash premium will be paid to producers who supply MNA with Red Angus cattle enrolled in the feeder calf program and wearing the official yellow tag. The cash premiums will be paid to producers upon final settlement for the cattle by MNA. The cash premium structure is as follows...

- **\$2.50 per head:** On all Yellow Tagged Red Angus Cattle purchased by MNA as feeder cattle and calves.

Through this cash premium, it is MNA's objective to reward producers of cattle that are not only meeting the specifications of their "Natural" program, but are also producing the type of carcasses that are excelling in their program due to the Red Angus genetic component of the cattle.

But Wait, There's More

In addition to the cash premiums above, any Certified Red Angus cattle that are sold through the MNA program will now also be eligible to receive the coveted Red Angus GridMaster award. This award was developed a few years ago to recognize both the cattle feeder and the cow/calf producer who marketed cattle on the Red Angus grid and excelled in overall carcass performance. Although the bar has been set high for the GridMaster award, producers who combine superior genetics and management expertise have been able to obtain this recognition.

While all GridMaster winners receive an official GridMaster jacket and cer-



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- **\$5.00 per head:** On all Yellow Tagged Red Angus Cattle committed to MNA's program grid.

- **\$3.00 per head:** On all Yellow Tagged Red Angus Cattle purchased by MNA on the open market as finished cattle.

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tificate from Red Angus Marketing Programs, MNA is offering an additional award package. At the end of the Red Angus fiscal year (June 30th), MNA will award an all expense paid trip for two to the 2007 National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas. Both the cow /calf producer and cattle feeder of the highest scoring set of cattle to go through the program will win the NFR trip. The Red Angus Grid Score tabulation will be used to determine this winner.

As a reminder, the GridMaster specs require cattle to be certified and tagged in the program; be marketed to the plant in a minimum lot size of 30 head; grade a minimum of 80% Choice or higher; be no more than 7.5% Yield Grade 4 carcasses; and earn an overall "Grid Score" of 100 or higher.

Are My Cattle Meyer Eligible?

With the beef industry's increased interest in Natural programs, and the newly introduced cash premiums offered by MNA, many producers may be wondering what it takes to qualify as "Natural". Producers should understand that there are some management practices that would exclude their cattle from "Natural" programs, including MNA. Cattle are ineligible for the MNA program if they have received implants, antibiotics, feed additives or animal by-products. Many producers believe that to be Natural, calves must never have come into contact with a needle; this is a misconception. A well designed vaccination schedule, supported by a strong mineral program to ensure the vaccines' effectiveness, is even more important for Natural calves than calves fed under conventional systems. Building a strong immune system allows cattle to acclimate to their new environment and stay healthy. If a calf becomes sick at the feed yard and requires any antibiotics, it must be removed from the Natural program. Therefore, the vaccination and mineral programs enhance your calves' appeal to MNA buyers.

Consumer demand for Natural Angus beef continues to expand. MNA is growing as fast as any natural product on the market, and wants to supply that demand with increased numbers of Certified Red Angus. This alliance between MNA and Red Angus Marketing Programs offers producers a "Natural" option to breed quality into their calf crop and build premiums into their marketing strategies.

For more information on the Meyer Natural Angus program, contact Jim Norwood at 816-769-7334 or the Meyer office in Loveland, Colo. at 970-292-5006. ■