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# Association Commentary

by Bob Hough, RAAA Executive Secretary

## Investing in Red Angus Bulls

**This is an exciting time of year when commercial producers select the seedstock bulls that will affect the genetics of their herd for years to come.** Red Angus have stood the test of time as one of the soundest genetic decisions a commercial producer can make. This is because the breed has always had a commercial focus, never chasing short-term fads that regularly grip the purebred beef industry.

Red Angus bulls can be counted on for consistency, unparalleled reliable genetic predictions, and the industry's premier service after the sale. Red Angus was formed in 1954 as the first performance based association largely in response to the excesses of the show-ring at the time. The idea, which still holds true today, was to base selection on heritable traits of known economic importance. To accomplish this task, objective data collection is the core of the Red Angus breeders' Association, which today takes the form of Total Herd Reporting (THR). This program is mandatory, so do not be misled by associations that have voluntary whole herd reporting. This is like being a little pregnant, because voluntary THR still allows biased data to enter the NCE. Red Angus is the true performance breed, not a pretender based on propaganda.

Red Angus has had the discipline to only produce EPDs on Economically Relevant Traits. Some associations have taken the approach that if they have the data and the trait is heritable they produce an EPD for what turns out to be an indicator trait. This undisciplined approach to EPD adoption is confusing and misses the big picture of focusing on traits of major economic importance. Red Angus has definitely kept the big picture at the forefront.

Rather than chasing transient breeders, Red Angus decided from the beginning to focus on supplying seedstock bulls to

commercial producers. Being grounded in the needs of the commercial industry has allowed Red Angus to make genetic progress while other breeds wasted valuable time chasing meaningless fads. Red Angus is truly a breath of fresh air, not carrying the pretenses of many purebred cattle associations, but taking a blue collar approach to producing the best genetics in the industry.

One of the hallmarks of Red Angus is commercial customer service after the sale. Red Angus does not have a field staff, but instead, has invested in professional commercial marketing personnel. This unique breed association design is effective because Red Angus defines their customers as commercial producers.

The host of services offered by RAAA's Commercial Marketing Department are broad based. It all starts with Red Angus' USDA Processed Verified Program (PVP), the Feeder Calf Certification Program; better known as the certified yellow tag. This PVP verifies Angus bloodlines, source verification, and new this year, group age verification. The tag allows entry into certain Angus product lines, value-based grids and positions cattle for export. A host of marketing opportunities are available including the feeder fax, barn sales, video sales, ProCow, and a national advertising campaign promoting Red Angus feeder cattle and commercial replacement females. Other services offered include a free EPD update on your herd bull battery and sire summary, upon request.

Red Angus is enjoying unequalled popularity for the right reasons. The cattle are right, the genetic predictions are reliable, and feeder cattle are sale toppers. As a commercial producer, you will have many options to spend your money on seedstock bulls. For the right reasons, we hope your decision will be to invest in Red Angus. ■