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Message from the Board

by Steve Andras, RAAA President

True "Efficiency"

While attending the NCBA annual meeting this January in Nashville, the main concern on everyone's lips was the cause / effect relationship of Ethanol on the price of corn. With corn prices hovering just below four dollars for over a month, what is the extent of our challenges as beef producers? Is this cause for concern? What do high corn prices mean for us as Red Angus breeders?

Exotic breeds have certainly enjoyed a hay day in the past several years of sub-two dollar corn. Feeding cattle to discount-free 1500+ pounds has provided feedlots with a tremendous amount of financial flexibility over the past number of years. As corn prices have sky-rocketed, we find ourselves in an enviable position as Red Angus breeders, much to the exclusion of exotic breeds. How do they combat this very real problem? The answer is Red Angus.

As Red Angus breeders, we deliver true cow efficiency, feedlot efficiency, and consistent calving ease. Furthermore, I would rather look out at a herd of Red Angus than any other breed, especially as corn and its coat-tailing feedstuffs

are priced beyond their benefit. Will grass-fed beef someday become the norm? Will the demand for corn-fed beef create a premium that will make feeding four-dollar corn feasible? No one really knows. What we do know is that those producing efficient cattle are in the driver's seat for years to come.

"Efficiency" has become the key word in beef production. Red Angus is leading the pack, boasting perhaps the most relevant EPD that has been established in recent years, Maintenance Energy (ME). As input costs increase, will more breeds look at this important EPD? I think that is inevitable. As feedyards more closely examine cost of gain and days on feed, Red Angus-sired calves become the obvious answer to the input question.

Your Red Angus Association has equipped its members to be the profitable, low-input producers that will survive this time of high-inputs. Efficient, functional cattle is what has drawn serious cattlemen to Red Angus, and that is not about to change. And in this time of extreme corn prices, we are in front of the pack. ■