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Board Commentary

by Steve Andras, RAAA President

Commitment: Never stops trying, and never tries stopping.

This year has been challenging for many of our breeders, from extreme drought to extreme flooding. However, here in Western Illinois, the extra rains were very welcome. Pastures that we didn't think would rebound after three years of drought, are lush and growing again. And just when things started to get dry again, Hurricane Gustav brought more replenishing rain, to the point that creeks are flowing in August and September, a rare phenomenon. Spring calves are being weaned and Fall calves are up and running full speed across the pasture with their tails straight up in the air.

There's a wholesome peace that cattlemen enjoy that makes the noise of the fast-paced world around us seem distant. What a blessing to see life restored to stunted vegetation and to watch beautiful red cows, peppered across the landscape in the middle of the afternoon, one can't help but feel rejuvenated.

As an Association, we can also feel and see the showers of revitalization and fresh ideas springing up. We see a new, more positive attitude in our Red Angus family, new technologies emerging, and a new spirit of cooperation. In November, we will embark on

the next five-year strategic plan, plotting a progressive course for the Red Angus Association. Innovative ideas are being proposed that will enhance our ability to compete. New technologies may completely renovate how we evaluate cattle, from across-breed numeric evaluation to genetic marker evaluation. And finally, a new spirit of cooperation: I believe the stage is set for breeders, associations, private businesses, and universities to work together and combine efforts in science, personnel, marketing, and promotion to assist our commercial customers in ways not yet conceived.

We now look ahead to the dawn of this new day. We are driven to stay on the leading edge of this industry, so that Red Angus cattle are worth more at every phase of production. As a result, everyone that utilizes Red Angus genetics (from purebred breeders to commercial cattlemen, and feeders to packers) will have all the tools necessary to enhance long-term profitability.

As I mentioned in the title of this article, your Red Angus Association is committed. We will never stop trying, and we will never try stopping.

-Steve