

## RAAA Board of Directors

### President

Kelli Brown  
Throckmorton, Texas  
kelli@rabrownranch.com

### 1st Vice President/ District 6 Director - Great Plains

Joe Mushrush  
Strong City, Kansas  
redcows@mushrushredangus.com

### 2nd Vice President/ District 4 Director-Southwest

Tom Woodward  
Omaha, Texas  
tomwoodward@brosecoranch.com

### Director Region A

Laurence Mendoza  
Valley Springs, California  
dzaredangus@yahoo.com

### Director Region B

Kim Ford  
Bertrand, Nebraska  
thefords@crossdiamondcattle.com

### Director Region C

Tommy Coley  
Birmingham, Iowa  
tcoley1952@aol.com

### District 1 Director - West

Rita McPhee  
Lodi, California  
info@mcpheeredangus.com

### District 2 Director - Montana

Esther Fischer  
Harlowton, Montana  
fischerra@mtintouch.net

### District 3 Director - Rocky Mountain

Forest Dunning  
Sheridan, Wyoming  
treds@rangeweb.net

### District 5 Director - Northern Plains

Gary Jacobson  
Hitterdal, Minnesota  
gjrangus@feltontel.net

### District 7 Director - Northeast

Martin Morgan  
Leicester, North Carolina  
m.morgan@att.net

### District 8 Director - Southeast

Raymond Prescott  
Gray Court, South Carolina  
bullhill2@mindspring.com

### District 9 Director - Midwest

Ryan Ludvigson  
Holstein, Iowa  
rl\_ludvigson@hotmail.com



# Board Commentary

by Tom Woodward, 2nd Vice President/ District 4 Director-Southwest

## Your Commercial Customer's Real Need

It is an honor to be serving on your board and a pleasure to write a few words of encouragement as we enter the new year. Is there a pot load of unknown? Are there serious questions about the direction of the ranching economy? Are your customers wondering how they are going to keep their boat afloat? These are tough and important questions, but for now, focus with me on another perspective. I will call it the 'Anna Belle Effect'.

Aunt Anna Belle lived in a retirement home for the last five years of her 95 year experience and it was my good fortune that her home was on my route to and from the ranch. She was an absolutely beautiful Christian woman that could make your day. Her cup was always more than half full. I might have been a little weary on arrival but her thoughtful, caring and uplifting spirit would always be a great picker upper. She always wanted to know about me. How were things with the family? How were things at the ranch? She was always so gracious and thankful that I had taken time out of 'my busy schedule' to drop by.

What is your attitude with your customers? Are you focused on them? What do they really need to face today's challenges (and that may not be exactly what they think they want)? Do you help them evaluate what they can do to stay in business? Do they leave encouraged and believing that you are really interested in their success?

In the late 1980's a group of economists developed an analytical tool for commercial ranchers called SPA (standardized performance analysis). By standardizing inventory records, converting to accrual accounting and establishing a fair rental value for land they were able to compare the financial performance of commercial ranching operations across the USA. The results published during the 90's emphasized the importance of reproductive performance.

I remember reading a magazine article back in the early 80's in which a Red Angus Breeder was interviewed about the things important to the commercial pro-

ducer and I will paraphrase; 'a dead calf doesn't have much value'. I would add that an open cow doesn't have much value either.

Brosec Ranch commercial cattle production records over the years confirm that reproduction is without question our most economically important trait. Calf crop percentage (the number of weaned calves divided by the number of cows exposed to the bull) always wins out. In our operation, this one measure is four to five times more important than carcass traits and nearly twice as important as growth traits. Yep, you are ahead of me, no we don't have an EPD for calf crop percentage. But we do have some maternal EPDs that can help us move in the right direction.

Our newly improved stayability EPD should be a great tool to help commercial producers that are retaining their own replacements. When I go to purchase a bull, I would really like to think that his mama was a consistent annual calver. Heifer Pregnancy, Calving Ease, and Maintenance Energy are all tools that can help a rancher move the reproductive performance needle.

Let's not forget that heterosis is a huge factor in reproductive rate. The increased vigor in the cow is one of the most crucial reasons for crossbreeding. Are your commercial customers focused in on how to use heterosis in their cow herd and how to fit Red Angus into the system?

Obviously, the bull must be ready to be productive during the breeding season. A complete BSE (breeding soundness evaluation) should be conducted on any bull prior to turning him over to a customer. I have seen it way too many times - for someone to just look at the sample to see if they observe some wiggling, and if so, call him good. That is not a BSE.

I haven't set out here to cover all the factors that can impact reproductive performance, and they are many, but simply to focus on the reproductive measures that we currently have in our arsenal. Encouraging customers to think about these tools and how they might improve their calf crop could be a neat new year's resolution. ■