

## RAAA Marketing Staff



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# Marketing Update

## Adding Value at Harvest Time... Naturally

**Meyer Natural Angus adds \$15/head Premium!**

Cattle producers nation wide are looking for ways to decrease input costs and widen their profit margins. Industry publications have printed countless articles on the value of "low-cost" production practices. Although managing costs is important, there is another way to increase your profit margin. What about increasing the value of our end product? This should be the ultimate goal for all of us. With a focus on the consumer, we can provide them with a product that they not only want, but one that consistently provides a good eating experience. Resulting in those same consumers returning to purchase the product again and again.

Many packers have programs that add value to our Red Angus cattle at harvest time. Meyer Natural Angus (MNA) has made a strong commitment to helping cattle feeders that own naturally raised, Red Angus fed cattle. MNA not only has Red Angus roots, but continues to utilize superior Red Angus genetics to provide a great product for retailers and a fine dining experience for consumers. So what is Meyer Natural Angus doing to accomplish this?

Let's start by defining what being a natural program means. The USDA definition of "Natural" is quite vague, which has resulted in companies using a number of different interpretations. Some programs claim natural for the last three hundred days prior to harvest; others for the last one hun-



dred twenty days prior to harvest; and yet others are considered "Pure Natural," which is Meyer Natural Angus' program. These "Pure Natural" programs are sometimes also known as "never-ever" programs.

But "never-ever" what? This is where the specifications come in. Natural cattle eligible for a "Pure Natural" program are animals raised without any antibiotics, growth hormones or implants and no animal by-products throughout their entire life. Does this mean producers cannot use vaccines? Absolutely not. In fact, cattle feeders looking to purchase naturally raised cattle will specifically be looking for producers who have a strong herd health program in place. This will include a well managed vaccination schedule and a designed mineral program that addresses known mineral deficiencies or imbalances. To help ensure success when feeding naturally, cattle must arrive at the feedlot with a well established and strong immune system which only comes as a result of a well managed herd health program.

In addition to being natural, the Meyer Natural Angus program requires cattle to be at least 50% Angus genetics. Meyer Natural Angus understands the value of the

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Red Angus Feeder Calf Certification Program and is an aggressive buyer of Natural fat cattle that are carrying the official Red Angus ear tag. These source, age and genetically verified cattle help MNA market fine beef to retailers that want to serve a premium product.

Because Meyer Natural Angus has the desire to locate high quality groups of Red Angus fed cattle, their procurement team has decided to "up the stakes". Starting in 2009, Red Angus fed cattle that are source, age and genetically verified through the Red Angus Association's FCCP program, will receive a fifteen dollar per head premium at the time of harvest. This premium is in addition to the Natural and overall grid premiums these cattle earn at market time. This premium will be paid directly to the producer who owns the cat-

tle at the time of harvest. Due to the superior carcass value that Red Angus cattle provide, Meyer Natural Angus believes this premium is a good investment in obtaining their goal of providing the best Angus beef product on the market today.

If you are a cow/calf producer and would like to learn more about this program and how you can receive this premium, Meyer Natural Angus has feedyard partners located throughout Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota that are ready to talk with you about a partnership or retained ownership opportunity. Please feel free to contact your Red Angus marketing staff or Blake Angell at [bangell@re-meyer.com](mailto:bangell@re-meyer.com) to learn more about the opportunity that exists through Meyer Natural Angus in obtaining that ultimate goal...increasing the value of your end product. ■