

## DEVELOPING A

# REGISTERED ANGUS HERD

Since the introduction of Angus cattle into the United States in 1873, the breed has established a reputation of meeting the demands of both the beef industry and the many needs of cattle producers. Backed by our heritage and eyes on innovation, we aim to guide new Angus breeders toward their own success in developing their registered herd.

Developing your herd can be a rewarding experience, but it's important to look at the foundational pieces to building your herd before you get started.



## FIRST STEPS:

- 1 PLANNING AND PREPARATION
- 2 MANAGING YOUR HERD
- 3 MARKETING AND PROMOTION

### PLANNING & PREPARATION

Regardless of your knowledge base or familiarity with the beef industry and Angus business, it is important to first evaluate available resources and implement a plan to uphold your definition of success. The planning and preparation portion suggests that you become informed about the Angus business and beef industry, consider your purpose, and create a written plan, specifically for your operation. More importantly, this particular piece encourages you to commit to your purpose by defining and recording your goals and ensuring follow-through with a written plan.

#### BE INFORMED

As a producer, you can achieve success by seeking and using information that will allow you to make educated decisions. Taking steps to be an informed producer encourages thoughtful planning and consideration of important factors—Association rules and requirements, finances and resources, herd management and marketing—that affect your individual Angus herd.

ASSOCIATION RULES AND REQUIREMENTS	Become familiar with the American Angus Association policies that are detailed in the Breeders Reference Guide, which is updated and published annually by the Association.
FINANCES AND RESOURCES	It is important to determine necessary and available resources for your operation such as land, time, labor, equipment, facilities, feed resources, etc., and the ways you'll obtain and oversee resources.
HERD MANAGEMENT PROGRAM	Relative to the various segments of the beef industry, there are a variety of inter-working parts for effectively managing a herd that meets your and your customers' needs. Included in these parts are an emphasis on strong genetics (herd selection & evaluation), sound animal husbandry practices and an efficient use of available resources.
MARKETING PROGRAM	The combination of planning, genetics and an effective herd management program will create opportunities to market your Angus and your services to customers.

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## DEFINE YOUR PURPOSE

There are many reasons people decide to raise Angus. Therefore, it is necessary to thoughtfully consider what your primary purpose is as an Angus producer. Defining a purpose—in the form of a simple guiding phrase such as a vision or mission statement—helps you easily establish an action plan. Your purpose will serve as the principal motivation to develop your strategies, objectives and goals to achieve success. In addition, your purpose will be strongly connected to your identity and reputation as an Angus producer.

## ESTABLISH A PLAN

Prior to purchasing your first Angus, you should write out an action-plan that you are comfortable putting into practice. By using the information you research, along with guidance from working relationships, you can anticipate potential needs, challenges and opportunities, and plan accordingly. It is up to you to develop an action-plan that is easy to maintain and follow and will keep you accountable as you develop your registered Angus herd. As you gather information about the Angus business and beef industry and begin to establish a plan, you should also be aware of important considerations for developing your herd. Several pieces can guide your action-plan so that you feel comfortable putting it into practice.

## BE ACCOUNTABLE

A straightforward way to create accountability is to keep a record of information. This includes writing down your recently established purpose as well as the information you have already researched. Make a habit of organizing and recording information about your herd; doing so provides reference points for achieving measureable results. This habit also applies to other methods of recordkeeping and documentation—such as maintaining financial documents and herd data—for your operation. It is equally important to record goals and include them as part of your plan. Create goals that will guide your management decisions. To achieve this, use the SMART (Simple, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-Oriented) approach for goal setting.

## REVIEW & REVISIT

Once you officially implement your plan and work toward your goals, reviewing & revisiting provides consistent evaluation of progress. Also, this keeps you constantly aware of the primary pieces of your operation: genetics, your herd management program and your marketing and financial needs. In addition, reviewing and revisiting this information creates an opportunity to establish new goals and focus on measureable results and areas of improvement for your herd.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER:

### BUILD STRONG WORKING RELATIONSHIPS:

- Consult people and organizations familiar with the Angus business and beef industry; your American Angus Association regional manager will be an important contact as you develop your Angus herd.
- Cultivate relationships with industry specialists familiar with your geographic area and herd management needs, such as your local Cooperative Extension agent and veterinarian.
- Make connections with local & regional Angus Associations and area cattlemen's organizations.

### IDENTIFY RESOURCES AND CAPITAL NECESSARY FOR YOUR OPERATION:

- Land, time, labor, equipment, facilities, feed resources including rangeland, pasture and other feed sources
- Determine availability of resources and how you will use them effectively.
- Consider environmental and geographic factors that will affect your herd.
- Determine how to best use your financial services and expertise to address existing and potential financial considerations of your operation

### EVALUATE THE AVAILABLE MARKET, AND YOUR POTENTIAL CUSTOMER BASE:

- Identify the specific genetic needs of your customers; determine how you will develop your herd to help fulfill their needs. More specifically, what genetics do you require to achieve your herd goals and meet customers' needs?
- Consider additional customer needs, and opportunities to provide excellent customer service.

### MAKE INFORMED PURCHASING DECISIONS:

- Determine the traits and characteristics of Angus that complement your herd goals; select animals according to your needs and goals.
- Explore and become familiar with the Association's available genetic selection tools. These reliable and convenient tools can aid your herd selection decisions and provide standardized tools to improve your Angus herd.



# REGISTERED ANGUS HERD

## MANAGING YOUR HERD

The management piece of the puzzle is a crucial one that combines effective planning with sound decisions. Effective herd management pieces together your customers' needs, your herd's needs as well as your needs into a comprehensive, well-designed herd management program.

You can aid herd management decisions and improve your management program with the use of available resources and information references, and detailed and complete herd records, along with the support of relationships.

### RECORDS

Just as you keep a record of researched information and write down your purpose and goals, it is important to maintain records of herd information and data. The process of keeping records for your herd is a useful way to understand your Angus herd and evaluate your progress. Your records provide signals about your management procedures, and they can play an integral role in future planning and objectively determining your herd goals. Your ability as a producer to maintain accurate records will translate into increased value for you and your Angus herd. You can utilize an effective record-keeping system to organize specific information about each animal in your herd. Detailed records including animals' weights, measurements and reproductive information that span the animal's life are a hallmark of the Angus business.

In addition to recording this information, you should keep track of nutrition and health information, as well as land use and management as part of your overall herd management plan.

### REFERENCES, RESOURCES AND SERVICES

The American Angus Association provides a variety of information, programs and services that can simplify your herd management program needs. Producers should utilize these available resources to develop a stronger understanding of how to manage their herd and achieve their goals. From industry-leading programs including seminars and leadership conferences, to BIR (Beef Improvement Records) and AHIR (Angus Herd Improvement Records), plus software and internet tools for record keeping called AIMS (Angus Information Management Software).

### RELATIONSHIPS

Producers seeking to understand the best practices to effectively manage their Angus herd can use the relationships they establish with their American Angus Association regional manager, local Cooperative Extension agent and veterinarian. These specialists can help determine an appropriate herd management plan that combines focused goals and procedures for cost-effective management practices prior to your first purchase. Your regional manager, Cooperative Extension agent and local veterinarian serve as a source for locally-focused management suggestions and perspectives; direct you to additional information sources—including local animal feed and health product suppliers, assess available resources and capital, evaluate nutritional needs of your herd, provide instruction on understanding and effectively using the Association's Expected Progeny Differences (EPDs) and \$Value Indexes and much more.

### HERD MANAGEMENT TIPS

- Selection and use of genetics appropriate for both your operation and your customers' herd needs.
- Prudent supervision and efficient use of available capital and resources (land, labor, time).
- Attentiveness to animal health and nutrition needs (including preventative health measures, routine vaccinations, appropriate diet—water, energy, protein, vitamin and mineral needs).
- Adherence to proper animal husbandry procedures.
- Knowledge of a beef animal's lifecycle—birth to maturity—and events such as calving, weaning and reproduction, and related needs to support successful herd maintenance and development.
- Awareness of important components of detailed record keeping and knowledge of how to effectively keep records
- Adherence to the routine responsibilities of maintaining your herd.
- Dates are a crucial component of effective record keeping. As part of your plan, use a calendar to guide various tasks and manage your resources.
- Schedule routine tasks including breeding, calving, identification, weaning, vaccination, etc.

# REGISTERED ANGUS HERD

## MARKETING YOUR HERD

The marketing and publicity piece of the puzzle focuses on the marketing methods you will incorporate into your overall plan for your Angus herd. A strong marketing plan is supported by a keen awareness of the industry and your product. Marketing your herd focuses on communicating the perception of your operation and promoting the services and products you provide customers—your ability as an Angus producer to respond and to fulfill customers' needs is imperative to your marketing success.

The herd management and planning pieces of the puzzle—including using information, strong working relationships, goal setting and planning—are also pieces that can be useful in your marketing planning. These particular pieces can help guide your decisions for incorporating cost-effective publicity and promotional strategies into your overall farm or ranch plan. As you develop your marketing strategies, you can focus on the pieces that establish your identity as an Angus producer, identify your market area, allocate resources and funds, and the product publicity and promotion.

### ESTABLISH YOUR IDENTITY

You have established your purpose; you can make this purpose more obvious by establishing your identity as an Angus producer. Simply put, your identity informs people of who you are and what products you provide.

### MARKET AREA AND POSITIONING

Define your market area based on your customer base, geography and the existing cattle market. Your position in the market will be determined by the product and services you provide your customers, so it is important to market your herd accordingly.

### MARKET AREA TIPS

- Define your market area and establish a customer base; it's helpful to map out a 150-mile radius from your farm or ranch
- Determine what products and services you provide and which segment of the beef industry your herd represents.
- Seek information from your regional manager as well as local Angus associations and cattlemen's organizations to learn about the Angus market in your area.

### IDENTITY TIPS

- Determine a name that will be primarily associated with your herd—this can be your given name, a specific name chosen for your operation, or a combination. You may want to select a name that corresponds with your herd and American Angus Association membership and its related programs. For more information, consult the American Angus Association's Breeders Reference Guide.
- Use a farm sign and place it in a visible location; keep the design simple and legible so that people can easily determine what you're merchandising.
- Publicize your contact information—provide potential customers the information on who to contact and how to contact them.

### PUBLICITY & PROMOTION

There are many opportunities producers can use to create a greater awareness of their herd. A tandem of basic public relation efforts and related promotional avenues will help create the awareness necessary to successfully market your herd. These efforts will also serve as the foundation for establishing your identity and positive perception as an Angus breeder.

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

Basic public relations (PR) efforts are a worthwhile and effective approach to maintaining a successful marketing plan. Once you have put in place this piece of the puzzle, you can incorporate various promotional

tools and advertising to enhance the visibility of your product. There are a variety of PR tactics that people can employ. The most credible, and the simplest, is word of mouth: a positive testimonial of a reputable Angus producer generates invaluable publicity for producers. Beyond your perception as a reputable producer and sincere Angus enthusiast, there are also other public relation tools. News stories—either generated from press releases or leads by people and groups that you have strong working relationships with—are simple, credible and easily available tools that can enhance your publicity and promotional efforts.