Developing a Registered Angus Herd
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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. The Angus breed is versatile and adaptable. It is the breed that has developed the most comprehensive database of herd information in the world. It is the breed that is synonymous with performance and quality. But more importantly, it is a breed whose supporters have dedicated significant effort and innovation to achieve this reputation.

This reputation inspires many individuals to take an interest in the Angus breed by developing their own herd. Developing an Angus herd that meets your needs can be a rewarding experience. Prior to your first purchase though, it is important to consider how the variety of related pieces fit together to create a complete picture.

This publication represents a piece of the puzzle to successfully develop a registered Angus herd. As a beginning guide, it highlights basic planning, managing and marketing pieces that can be put together to accurately portray your registered Angus herd. In addition, this publication encourages you to seek additional information outlets, available from the American Angus Association® and other industry partners, to develop your herd.

As you commit to becoming more informed about the Angus business, Angus genetics and effective planning management and marketing tools, you will be able to successfully put together the pieces to both develop and maintain a registered Angus herd.
Planning & Preparation: putting together pieces of the puzzle

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—do your research

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.

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—support your purpose

It is important to create accountability measures for your farm or ranch. Prior to purchasing your first Angus, you should write out an action-plan that you are comfortable putting into practice. Developing a plan is easily accomplished once you establish your purpose. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association rules &amp; requirements:</th>
<th>Become familiar with the American Angus Association policies that are detailed in the <em>Breeders Reference Guide</em>, which is updated and published annually by the Association</th>
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<td>Finances &amp; resources:</td>
<td>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</td>
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<td>Herd management program:</td>
<td>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 &amp; evaluation), sound animal husbandry practices and an efficient use of available resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing program:</td>
<td>The combination of planning, genetics and an effective herd management program will create opportunities to market your Angus and your services to customers</td>
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Planning considerations
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—write it down
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 measurable results. This habit also applies to other methods of record-keeping 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
It is important to review and revisit your purpose, goals and the plan you establish for your herd. 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 measurable results and areas of improvement for your herd.

Review the following considerations prior to beginning your herd:

Establish 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.

Consult with your local financial institution:
✓ Determine how to best use its 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.
✓ Utilize your herd goals and genetic requirements to scrutinize production data on potential purchases; do your best to ensure your investment will be a prudent purchase for your herd.
Managing Your Herd: records, references, resources and relationships

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.

Efficient use of these pieces as part of a well-thought-out plan will help you meet your goals and develop a herd management program:

- 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.

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 & 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.

**Association resources available to producers include:**

- Industry-leading programs—including seminars & leadership conferences—that focus on management topics specific to the Angus breed and the needs of producers are also important Association services.

- Beef Improvement Records (BIR), which is comprised of Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®) and Beef Record Service. The American Angus Association has the world’s most extensive database of herd data compiled from producers who partake in the Association’s BIR service. Producers can utilize these services and the available genetic selection tools for their herd.

- The Association’s software and Internet tools are practical record-keeping resources for producers. These tools including Angus Information Management Software (AIMS) and AAALogin can simplify your record-keeping needs and streamline the transfer of information from the producer to the Association. You can use these tools to store herd data such as pedigrees and performance information and customer contact information as well as any other pertinent herd information.

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; provide guidance for implementing tools to best utilize them
- Evaluate nutritional needs of your herd; develop practices to address these needs based upon your geography and resources (i.e., forage, rangeland and pasture)
- Highlight proper animal handling information—including human and animal safety, transportation, facilities and equipment use and correct animal handling techniques
- Provide guidance for implementing preventative herd health procedures
- Discuss procedures for providing proper care throughout an animal’s lifespan—including birth, weaning, yearling, and maturity—and advise of the corresponding tasks (animal identification, vaccination, breeding, etc.) that facilitate effective management
- Discuss management practices that involve genetic selection and reproductive management
- Provide instruction on understanding and effectively using the Association’s Expected Progeny Differences (EPDs) and $Value Indexes
Market Your Herd: the pieces to create awareness of your product

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 to and 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.

Basic information—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.

Ways to help you establish your identity as an Angus producer:

- 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. (Keep in mind that for clarification purposes, you may want to select a name that corresponds with your herd and American Angus Association membership and its related programs. For more information about this topic, 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

Market area & 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.

Practices to determine your market area & positioning can include:

- 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: which segment of the beef industry does your herd represent?
- 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
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.

Promotion

Simple and informative promotional pieces can be used to supplement your public relations efforts. There are a variety of ways to effectively promote your herd. You may be interested in the following examples of how to relay your purpose and identity to your potential customer base:

Simple tactics to support your PR efforts include:

- Establish a reputation for quality.
- Provide excellent service for your customers. Understand their needs and goals and help attain them.
- Seek customer feedback, and use it to guide the direction of your herd.
- Create a customer database to help track your customers’ needs and record feedback. Use it to store their contact information.
- Maintain strong working relationships with your local Angus Association and cattlemen’s organizations, vets, extension agents and other producers.
- Make yourself and your herd visible to your existing customer base and potential customers—engage them by hosting events such as judging practices for area youth livestock organizations or a field day.

Simple approaches to promote your herd include:

- Develop brochures that highlight your herd and services
- Utilize a Web site to provide a convenient avenue for accessing information about your operation.
- Integrate advertising to enhance your herd promotion efforts. There are a variety of advertising mediums—print, radio and Internet advertisements—that provide many promotional possibilities.
Resources

The greater portion of your marketing program’s success will be supported by your reputation as an Angus producer. You can use publicity and promotional efforts to enhance your marketing strategy and highlight your product. Regardless of the promotional efforts you select for your marketing plan, it is necessary to have resources that will support your efforts. Develop an advertising budget and include it in your overall operational plan. This will provide a clear-cut analysis of the most cost-effective methods you’re using to promote your herd.

Support

The American Angus Association offers a variety of tools and services that help producers fulfill their marketing goals. These services range from publicity, including press releases and feature stories in Angus Productions Inc.’s (API) widely read publications to a variety of advertising mediums. Your regional manager can help direct you to the Association’s most effective publicity and promotional approaches for your herd.

List of Reference Materials: pieces to complete the puzzle

Information—and your ability to seek and use it—is a valuable resource for sustaining the success of your herd. The American Angus Association aims to provide producers access to information with a variety of breed- and industry-focused programs and services. As an Angus producer, you can include these pieces—along with the help of people committed to your success—into developing your Angus herd.

The following section highlights reference sources that elaborate on genetics, management, planning, and marketing.

Association-based Reference Material and Sources

American Angus Association: www.angus.org

- Access to additional resources, including performance programs information, Association newsroom, data searches and tools, and interactive modules and tutorials
- Web links to various industry and Angus associations and groups, as well as Angus merchandise and marketing materials
- Online access to the Association’s Breeder’s Reference Guide

Angus Education Center: www.angus.org/AngusEducation.html

- Provides breed-specific educational material and tutorials
- Features interactive modules and videos, including demonstrations on properly submitting registrations to the Association, correct animal identification techniques and utilization of Association programs and services

Performance Programs: www.angus.org/performance/

- Highlights the Association’s Performance Programs, including descriptions of EPDs and $Values
- Access to the Association’s data searches and tools: age in days calculator, optimal milk module, gestation calculator, $Value search, as well as online look-up for the Association’s sire evaluation and Pathfinder® reports
Angus Productions Inc. (API): www.angusproductions.com
• Features a variety of online publication content, including the Association’s primary print publications, the Angus Journal and Angus Beef Bulletin
• Convenient online access to current breed and industry information, as well as marketing tools and services
• Online coverage of seminars, conventions and other educational events

API Topic Sites: www.angusproductions.com/api_topicsites.html
• Features convenient, online access to regularly updated information covering a variety of industry-focused topics

Certified Angus Beef LLC: www.certifiedangusbeef.com
• Consumer-focused information regarding the Certified Angus Beef® brand, including product information and recipes
• Brand licensee information

Supply development: www.cabpartners.com
• Features producer-focused information detailing the Certified Angus Beef program
• Online links to producer educational material, news releases, proceedings from industry events including CAB® factsheets, as well as beef-supply chain information

Industry-based Reference Material and Sources

There are a variety of industry-focused Web sites that focus on helping producers maximize their investments, and provide current educational information. In addition to the Web sites, links and educational material available from the American Angus Association and its subsidiaries, the following resources will provide further information and guidance toward developing your herd.

Cooperative Extension & land grant universities: www.csrees.usda.gov
• Your area Cooperative Extension offices and local land grant universities can provide additional information concerning herd management
• Discuss pertinent industry topics and publicize geographically specific management tips and advice

www.beef.org
• Compilation of producer-, retail- and consumer-focused information
• Internet links to relevant beef industry information

Cattle Learning Center: www.cattlelearningcenter.org
• Online courses, tutorial modules and educational material
• Detailed producer education focus, including production and resource management
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