



Start Strong, End Strong

Targeting the Brand provides advantages from Angus seedstock suppliers to the feedyard.

by Jessica Wesson

Nothing worth having ever comes easily.

That's especially true when it comes to breeding Angus cattle that will qualify for the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB) brand. For Angus bull buyers looking for a sire more likely to throw calves that qualify for CAB, there's an easy button: *Targeting the Brand*™.

In 2017 CAB unveiled the program to help cow-calf producers by providing an easily identifiable mark that appears next to registered Angus cattle in sale books or the breed registry lookup online. It eases the potentially overwhelming process of flipping through a sale book to find bulls with expected progeny differences (EPD) and index numbers that may result in more CAB qualifiers.

"When I start going through the Benoit Angus Ranch bull [sale book], one of the first things I look for is the *Targeting the Brand* logo," says Troy Anderson, Anderson Cattle in Guide Rock, Neb. The commercial



Minimum Genetic Requirements

	Value
Marbling EPD (Marb)	+0.65
Dollar Grid Carcass Index (\$G)	+55.0

cattleman feeds out his own calves and those of customers' in his 850-head feedyard. He adds, "That logo stamped on the registration papers stands out and makes it easy to sort out the kind of bulls we want to go after. It tells me they will produce a higher percentage of calves hitting the CAB specifications."

A resource for genetic evaluation

Registered Angus bulls must have a 0.65 marbling (Marb) EPD or higher and +55 grid value (\$G) dollar value index to qualify for the program.

This means those bulls' progeny have the genetics to potentially hit a 50% acceptance rate into the brand. These numbers were decided based on sire-identified carcass data from more than 8,600 records in the American Angus Association database.

These minimums give producers the flexibility to make genetic improvements in their herd without going to extreme measures. The Marb and \$G thresholds fall in the 40% range within the breed percentile breakdown.

Benoit Angus Ranch, Esbon, Kan., has used *Targeting the Brand* for several years. In 2023, 76% of their bull offering met *Targeting the Brand* requirements.

"*Targeting the Brand* motivates us to improve every animal when we make our breeding decisions. We try to get balanced traits in our calves," Doug Benoit says, noting weaning and yearling weight as well as maternal traits are also a focus. "Several customers will buy off of the *Targeting the Brand* logo. They will

usually pick a trait that they want to improve in their herd, but they also want to keep the carcass data up for the premium they can get. The logo helps them do that.”

While a strong starting point, the logo is not a guarantee that calves will qualify for the brand. Environmental conditions, production management and maternal genetics also play a role in each calf’s ability to make it into a premium beef brand at the packer.

Tell customers your calves’ potential

When purchasing feeder calves, *Targeting the Brand* can also communicate a group’s carcass potential for buyers with a quality-based marketing plan. That’s from Paul Dykstra, CAB director of supply management and analysis, who says the logo can also be seen on the AngusLinkSM Genetic Merit ScorecardSM (GMS).

“AngusLink has several facets in which cattle can be verified based on claims the producer is making, and it starts at the most basic level

of verifying the Angus parentage of those calves,” Dykstra says. “There are also other aspects of the program that can add value to the commercial man’s calves.”

The GMS identifies a calf crop’s genetic performance potential by three scores: beef, feedlot performance and grid. Scores range between zero to 200, with 100 representing industry average. Groups of calves enrolled can carry the *Targeting the Brand* logo if they receive a 125 grid score or higher.

“The Genetic Merit Scorecard utilizes up to 10 years of sire data within a herd to assign scores,” Dykstra says. “The scores are also based on the breed composition of the cow herd.”

Daron Huyser is the assistant manager at M&M Feeders in Lexington, Neb. He sources 1,500 to 2,000 AngusLink calves annually.

“AngusLink calves are from producers who are proud of the genetics that they’ve built over a lifetime,” Huyser says. “These are cattle that I would be proud to raise and put in the front row feed pens.”




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Just like when purchasing registered Angus cattle, Huyser says the GMS simplifies the selection process and increases his team’s confidence in the cattle they buy. When he sees a GMS scorecard carrying the *Targeting the Brand* logo, it sets them apart.

“We look for calves that have high carcass scores, are feed efficient and have been managed in a way that optimizes their performance,” Huyser says. “All of these attributes have been carefully planned for by progressive cattlemen striving to produce high-quality beef.”

He says welcoming AngusLink calves to M&M Feeders is easy, partly because he’s confident in the work seedstock producers put in long before those feeder calves arrive at his feedyard.

“We feed a lot of different cattle, from retained ownership to sale barn calves,” Huyser says. When AngusLink calves enter his pens it’s exciting, he adds, because he knows they have the genetic potential to be some of the best calves they’ll feed and will finish strong. 

EDITOR’S NOTE: Jessica Wesson is a Certified Angus Beef producer communications freelance writer.

Free marketing tool

Registered Angus breeders can use the *Targeting the Brand* logo to identify bulls that have a higher likelihood of siring calves that will be eligible for CAB. Use the logo to identify each registered Angus bull or female that meets the genetic requirements in your sale book.

The logo can be downloaded for free by scanning the QR code or visiting cabcattle.com/targeting-the-brand/cattle-marketing/seedstock/.

