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Association Commentary

by Dr. Bob Hough, Executive Secretary

Red Angus breeders have had a tremendous year. Both the volume of bulls and their value were up significantly making for record sale grosses for many operations. Registrations were also strong, continuing their steady rise. We also saw strong demand abroad with export semen sales increasing eight percent. Right now, Red Angus is the envy of the industry and admired for its leadership.

It is no fluke that Red Angus is in such an enviable position. We are naturally riding a good market, but beyond that, the breed is building on its 52 year tradition of industry leadership. From the very beginning with open A.I. and mandatory performance, Red Angus has never been a follower. We are at a crossroads today, to be a leader or a follower. Cross-breed EPDs is an example. They are coming, and we will be adopting them. It is in our Strategic Plan which was approved by the Board multiple times. Beyond that, the National Beef Cattle Evaluation Consortium ([see pg. ???](#)) has developed it as the model which all breeds getting their National Cattle Evaluations done at Colorado State University, University of Georgia and Cornell will be moving to. In the future, Colorado State will no longer be producing EPDs, but instead they will all be done at University of Georgia on a multi-breed basis. The question is; during this certain change, will we lead or follow? If Red Angus history has taught us anything, it that is the answer to this question is we will lead. (Anyone not familiar with the breed's history is encouraged to purchase *The History of Red Angus* available from the National Headquarters.)

If you have questions about across-breed EPDs, please go to the web site or refer to pages 30 to 34 in last month's ARA Magazine. We will also have more articles in upcoming magazines to help lead you through the process of this transition. It is our goal that this positive development in our National Cattle Evaluation will lead to even further increases in Red Angus commercial bull market share. Starting with the winter run in January 2007 we are scheduled to be converted to across-breed growth EPDs. If the universities stay on schedule, carcass traits will come later that year and threshold traits in 2008. RAAA educational efforts to support this transition will first be centered on the membership before switching to the customer base.

Red Angus breeders and their customers will also enjoy Decision Support Software developed by Colorado State University (pg. 70 of Feb. 2006 ARA Magazine). This software allows breeders to sort sires by breed code and is far superior to simple indexes with fixed inputs and scenarios. With across-breed EPDs and Decision Support Software Red Angus breeders and their customers will be able to make the best informed objective decisions in the history of our industry.

Red Angus breeders have had a tremendous year, but the best years still lie ahead. It is a matter of Red Angus being Red Angus; being an early adopter of technology and showing leadership within the industry. Red Angus has always done this, and I am certain always will. ■