

# Message from our Founders

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## Concerning the Possibility of Proxy Voting For the Association

By Sal Forbes

*Written August, 2006*

I cannot say too strongly how strongly both Waldo and I felt, at the start of the Association, to avoid Proxy Voting. We wanted an informed membership and an Association that was run by its membership, not by outsiders and others not very familiar with the issues. Mrs. McDaniel<sup>1</sup> felt very strongly the same way and we went over the by-laws of a great many cattle, dog, and every other kind of an association and felt that the strongest ones were those that did not have proxy voting. We wanted our membership informed on every issue they voted on and very informed about all the business of the association itself so that it was actually run by the members themselves and not by a distant Board of Directors, etc.

I feel the same way now, perhaps even more strongly, since we do have a very strong Association and an excellent Board and excellent staff, far more than we of course had at the very beginning. I do feel that a great deal of our strength has been because we have had an Association that was run by its members themselves and an informed membership that was close to the workings of the whole Association.

We have had a very informed, interested and involved membership up to this time and I think it is important to keep it that way. We have an outstanding Association that has been very progressive and led the industry with their effective, informed guidance.

Again, I cannot say it too strongly; I feel we should not now put in Proxy Voting.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. S Taylor McDaniel and Sal Forbes were the two primary authors of RAAA's Constitution and By-Laws.



## Early Challenges and Ultimate Success of RAAA

by George Chiga  
*(Reprinted from 1995)*

At the particular time when Red Angus was first coming on the scene, many of the seedstock breeders of the various recognized breeds were loath or reluctant, and in most cases unprepared to do weighing of calves at birth, at weaning or checking on their gaining ability after weaning. Performance testing was just coming on the scene. Many breeders of the old established breeds did not take kindly to compulsory weighing of the cattle at anytime. The new breeders came in to the new association uninitiated and tended to copy or adopt the prevalent and conventional attitudes of breeders of the established breeds and the attitude of Stock Shows. For the most part Stock Shows paid little or no attention

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and were little interested in the programs that had to do with gainability and carcass quality and other performance traits. However, the shows did dominate type selection in beef cattle production. As a rule the show judges and the instructors of college judging classes were not faculty members with PhDs in animal breeding. Books could be written on this facet of the cattle industry.

A certain flexibility enjoyed by the Red Angus breed was that while it was small, each member present had a vote at the Annual Conventions. Because the voting members were present and informed, all at the same time, and because of its smaller size, it allowed the breed to adopt changes readily. This flexibility has been an important asset to the new breed seeking to be progressive in a real sense.

To break with long established custom and prevailing tradition was not popular with most of the purebred breeders of the established breeds. There were those unsatisfied souls in other breeds that, like the charter members of the Red Angus Association, were truly interested in the performance movement early on. In contrast to the old attitudes, the Red Angus Association was performance oriented from its inception. Even so, there were some unconvinced new members joining, often inclined to follow industry tradition, sometimes even delaying progress within the breed. It was fortunate that most of the new breeders that came into Red Angus early were breeders that liked the logic of performance testing, and were pleased to follow the logical Animal Breeding Principles.

At the time of the first major revision of the Association's Constitution and By Laws, an unsuccessful effort was made to introduce proxy voting. Proxy voting when avoided leaves each member(ship) entitled to one vote and serves the Breed well in helping maintain attendance at the Annual Conventions. The conventions provide an opportunity for up-dating breeders and their understanding of breed goals and thereby strengthening and enhancing breed programs and progress.

In light of this history, it should be noted that the early Red Angus breeders showed a remarkable degree of foresight and dogged dedication. The success and the present day status of the breed, owes much to these breeders that clung to their goals and saw their efforts prevail, despite the efforts made from time to time by new and transient members having varied interests, some not in line with the evolving interests and goals of the Red Angus Breed program. ■