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# Message from the Board

by Steve Andras, RAAA President

## Missing the point...

The story is told of a boy who was corrected by his teacher after she heard him say "I have wrote." To enforce this correction, she demanded the boy stay late and write "I have written" 100 times. She later found the pages on her desk with a note that read: "I have wrote 'I have written' 100 times as you told me and so I have went home."

Sadly, the lessons we have learned as cattle producers (purebred and commercial) often follow the same course as the boy's grammar lesson. Throughout the course of each year, we are quick to understand and agree as to the long-term genetic needs that we must protect, promote, and procure for our breeding program. The breakdown in our commitment to these criteria often occurs in the heat of bull sale season. Our commitment to balance is often divorced due to a seasonal romance and infatuation with a genetic or phenotypic outlier. This alluring specimen could be the next "great one" due to his extreme ultrasound data, or extreme performance, or an extreme EPD, or an extremely popular pedigree, or extreme size, or extreme muscle, etc.

Granted, finding the bull with the right extreme at the right time has panned out from time to time for some (the same could be said for playing the Lottery). However, this is characteristic of the exception, not of the rule.

This is an interesting case study to ensue, particularly when watching the EPDs of many an 'outlier' or 'spread' bull over a five or six year period as their progeny perform and begin producing. Upon examination

of many one-time 'outlier bulls' over the course of their life in consecutive sire summaries, many of these 'greats' slip into the lake of anonymity as their progeny multiply and their EPDs shift to the right or to the left. Is this reality worth the risk? To some, yes...To many, a definite 'no.'

George Chiga said a mouthful when he penned the following in the September, 1988 issue of ARA: "Looking back over the years, and in the process attempting to recall some of the errors observed, I can't escape noting the ill effects of breeders following trends. Especially those trends not based on established animal breeding principles designed for efficient beef production... Promise of some income short term though it may be, has a certain appeal to those eager for instant success or even some notoriety and not really interested in improving efficiency in beef production."

As breeders, we have an obligation to our customers (and as a result, to ourselves) to carefully weigh the needs of our customers and supply seedstock that will ensure his long-term profitability, in addition to educating him to this end. Further, we must shrewdly examine the genetics presented to us and take special care to avoid the enticement of 'trendy' beef production...a lesson learned, then forgotten far too often in our business.

As Red Angus breeders, we have arrived at the dance, and balance brought us. We know what to do.

Wishing you a safe and profitable new year. ■