

RAAA Young Breeders

by Sydney Janssen, RAAA Spring Intern

The annual RAAA Young Breeders meeting was held at the Double Tree Hotel in Denver, Colorado in collaboration with the 2007 National Western Stock Show. Eight bright young minds gathered to discuss the topic of how breed growth is sustained through increased market share. RAAA Marketing Programs Coordinator, Greg Comstock led an interactive discussion with attendees representing North Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Kansas, Missouri, Minnesota, and Oklahoma.

Comstock demonstrated Red Angus' rankings amongst the largest beef breeds in the United States from 1993 to 2004. In that eleven year stretch, Red Angus gained significant ground vs. other breeds as shown in Figure 1.

Western Livestock Journal conducted a survey of bull customers and their choice of breed purchase. As you can see in Figure 2, Red Angus is tied for second with Hereford, when corrected to percent market share, the WLJ survey indicates Red Angus enjoys a 10 percent market share.

Red Angus breed growth has a direct connection to growth in market share. Comstock suggested that healthy breed growth should be driven by demand for Red Angus genetics; if so, increased cow numbers and memberships could be supported. Red Angus is in its third straight year of double digit increases in bulls sold to commercial producers. Between 2005 and 2006 the number of bulls sold via public auction increased by 14.4 percent and the average sale price increased by 13.9 percent. This supports the concept that Red Angus genetics work for commercial producers.

After the implementation of the Red Angus Strategic Plan (1993), which foresaw installment of THR (1995) and the expansion of Red Angus Marketing Programs (1994) the growth rate in both membership (Figure 3) and Registration/Recordations (Figure 4)

Figure 1.



Figure 2.

WLJ Bull Survey

Rank	Breed	% Using Breed
1	Angus (AAA)	69%
2	Angus (RAAA)	13.90%
2	Hereford	13.90%

Figure 3.

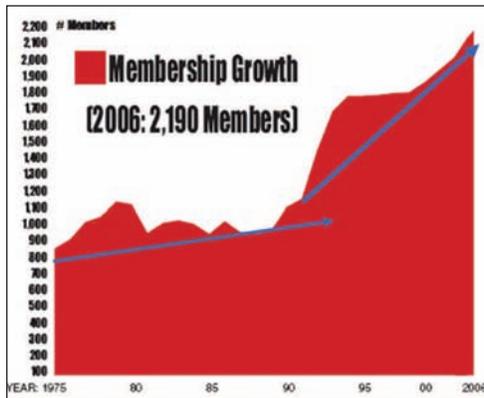
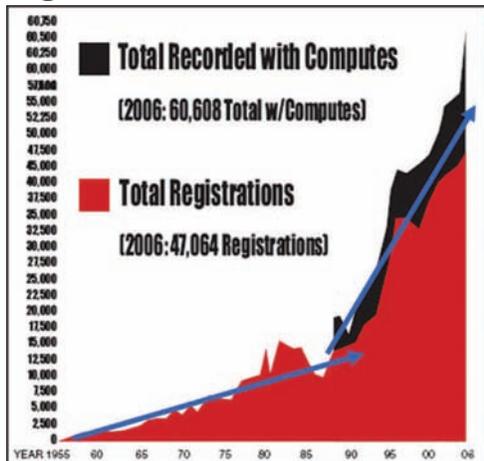


Figure 4.



trended up sharply. In fact, RAAA is the only major beef breed association currently at its peak in registration numbers.

Red Angus Strategic Plan, Core Strategy number 3 states "To: Enhance breed identity, brand loyalty and commercial marketing services." In 1994, the Feeder Calf Certification Program (FCCP) was built to assist commercial producers using Red Angus genetics to market their calves as genetically verified, and access Angus product lines. Source verification, though an industry buzzword was actually a by-product of genetics, and the FCCP is now in its second decade of providing source verification to the ranch of origin. Age verification was added in 2006 to stay current with changing demand, primarily from export markets. Another way to promote feeder calves is through the Red Angus Feeder FAX. It is a free service that sends an electronic description of the cattle to feedlots, and order buyers that have an interest in Certified Red Angus. A third program, Pro-Cow, allows producers to list their Red Angus sired commercial replacements on the website.

Communication between members and customers is a key ingredient for breed growth. Members become educated via RAAA staff, ARA Magazine, www.redangus.org, and attending this Young Breeders meeting or Young Guns Conference in July in Denton, Texas. Members and customers interact through many of the same channels, and also at bull sales, feeder calf sales, and joint participation in Red Angus Marketing Programs. Commercial producers are the key support of our Red Angus breeders, and our Association. Supporting Red Angus marketing programs helps customers harvest higher returns from their Red Angus genetic investment, and ultimately keep our breed growing through expanding market share.