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# **Association Commentary**

by Bob Hough, RAAA Executive Secretary

For new bull buyers this will be their first issue of the ARA Magazine, because every non-member who purchases a bull receives a free one year subscription to the journal. New readers of the magazine will find it a useful tool written with a technical, commercial marketing and management slant that avoids the usual breeder profiles and self pats on the back found in typical breed journals. The reason for this is simple, the majority of people who receive the magazine are commercial producers, and we feel our members need the same information as their commercial customers. Therefore, it is only natural that the ARA Magazine has a commercial focus.

As a Red Angus bull buyer, the magazine is only one of the many services available to you. Each January, upon request, a free EPD update is available on your bull battery. This includes all the bulls you have bought over time, so you can check genetic trends and review bloodlines, prior to the upcoming bull sale season. Also available at no charge is the Red Angus sire summary and membership directory. RAAA also has geneticist Larry Keenan on staff who can consult with you one-on-one and help you use decision support software if desired.

The other major area of services is commercial marketing. The back bone of the Commercial Marketing Program is the Feeder Calf Certification Program (FCCP). The FCCP is twelve years old and was the beef industry's first program to become a USDA Process Verified Program. The FCCP certifies cattle for age, source and genotype allowing enrolled cattle to enter into approved Angus product lines. The flagship branded beef programs are Cargill Meats Solutions' Sterling Silver and Angus Pride products. Cattle can be sold to Cargill live, in-the-meat, through regional grids, or through the exclusive Angus America grid. We are very excited about the renewed interest and improved staffing Cargill has planned for Angus

America. Niche market premium programs are available with Meyer Natural Angus and National Packing's natural product lines. Meyer has been especially aggressive both buying feeder cattle and offering a high quality grid. They also reimburse the FCCP tag cost regardless of how the cattle are purchased (feeder cattle, fed cattle, etc.). Contact our Commercial Marketing Director, Dr. Ron Bolze (402/426-2033 or 402/321-0067), for further information on these programs.

Red Angus offers a variety of feeder cattle marketing services. First, Red Angus has a significant advertising budget geared towards selling Red Angus influenced feeder cattle and commercial replacement females. We have always had a simple philosophy, if we can sell the feeder cattle we can sell the bulls. This has paid off with Red Angus regularly topping national feeder cattle sales such as Superior Livestock Auction. Also available is the Red Angus Feeder Fax where you can list load lots of cattle regardless of how they are being marketed, and it will be sent to numerous feed yards and order buyers. There are also numerous special Red Angus sale barn sales, logo recognition in major video auctions, and the PRO COW commercial female marketing service. For more information on these services, contact Red Angus Marketing Coordinator Greg Comstock at the National Headquarters or Ron Bolze. To list animals on the feeder fax contact Ann Holsinger at the National Headquarters. PRO COW also provides an easy online listing service, see PRO COW @ [www.redangus.org](http://www.redangus.org).

Purchasing a Red Angus bull is more than purchasing a genetic vector. Instead, you are buying into a program of information and services that will help keep you in the black. I hope you take advantage of whatever services make sense for your operation even if that means just enjoying this excellent magazine ten times a year. ■