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# **Association Commentary**

by Bob Hough, RAAA Executive Secretary

## **Commercial Marketing Program**

The Red Angus Association of America (RAAA) defines customers as commercial producers. It has always been the philosophy of RAAA that if our customers are profitable our breeders will be profitable. That is what makes this Commercial Marketing issue of the ARA Magazine so special.

One of the Core Policies of the RAAA is, "The Association's general role in assisting marketing of the membership's cattle is to have the best objectively described cattle in the industry and to provide the best service to our members' customers..." We think we achieve the goal of the latter half of this core policy better than any other purebred cattle association. We offer a myriad of services and programs that will fit almost any commercial operation.

We do this through the Commercial Marketing Program, which was started in 1994 and has enjoyed a number of firsts. The Feeder Calf Certification Program (FCCP) was the first USDA Processed Verified Program (PVP) of any kind. This means the FCCP adheres to very strict ISO standards. Started in 1995 and overseen by USDA, this program has the utmost integrity and is a tremendous bargain offering genotype, age and source verification for the price of the tag.

RAAA led the industry in value based marketing. In 1995, RAAA was the first breed to offer a value based grid. This was revolutionary at the time, and paid producers for the quality they were producing. It also empowered feed yards to schedule cattle when they thought they ready rather than when an order buyer thought they were ready. It was in the fall during a time of high corn prices and feed yard managers started sending their Red Angus with fewer and fewer days on feed. The cattle continued to grade

well; they got great Yield Grades and close-outs were excellent. Red Angus had arrived!

Red Angus also offers a number of feeder cattle marketing options and a commercial female marketing program, PRO COW. Results of recent video sales show that not only has the color discount gone away, but that tagged Red Angus influenced cattle are bringing a significant premium. We have also seen many female loads sell off the charts, obviously being purchased to be developed as replacement heifers. As the first Marketing Coordinator, who started several of these programs, this brings me great satisfaction.

Red Angus is blessed with a group of commercially minded breeders. They know that if their customers can be profitable selling their feeder cattle, they will have no problem selling their bulls. That is the whole idea behind the Commercial Marketing Program. The ultimate goal is to profitably market bulls utilizing a real economy and not slogans and hype.

## **Berry Joins Team**

I am very pleased to announce that Clint Berry from Urbana, Missouri has accepted the position of Membership Services/Communication Coordinator, starting September 17, 2007. Clint is a native of Missouri where he grew up on a commercial cow calf operation and graduated with a degree in Animal Science from Missouri State University. No stranger to Red Angus, he managed Niangua River Ranch for six years and was an officer in the Missouri Red Angus Association.

In his new position, Clint will interact with state and regional associations and work with new members. He will also oversee press releases and contribute to the magazine. Clint will be living in Denton, Texas. ■