



Pulling Together to Promote Red Angus!

by Clint Berry, RAAA Communications/Member Services Director

When I was brought on board, a priority was to improve the communication, involvement and cooperation between the National Office and the Affiliate Organizations. The RAAA Board of Directors stressed a need to reinforce the resources that the National Office can provide the Affiliate Organizations.

It is the hope of RAAA that by empowering the Affiliate Organizations, their members will become more involved in promoting Red Angus in their regions and create increased demand for Red Angus genetics. The members of the Affiliates have great knowledge of their local markets, advertising avenues and an understanding of their customer base that exceeds that of the National Office. There are several steps that the National Office has/is taking to accomplish this goal.

■ Increase the presence of RAAA Staff Members at the various Affiliate functions to help promote Red Angus and coordinate the efforts of both groups.

■ RAAA funding for the Cooperative Advertisement Program has been increased from \$1500 to \$2000 annually.

■ Initiate more involvement by the Affiliate Membership by encouraging the Affiliates to create committees responsible for specific tasks. This would allow more individuals to take an active role in the

Affiliate's business and create a tradition of involvement.

■ Listen to the ideas at the "grass roots" level of our membership and help implement the actions that better promote Red Angus in the industry.

■ Provide avenues of communication to allow each Affiliate to share ideas with one another.

As I travel around the country to your Affiliate meetings, functions and sales, I'm learning the areas of need that are similar as well as those that are specific to each Affiliate. A concern for one organization may have no bearing on the success or failure of another; the market and environment that each Affiliate faces is usually different. However, some challenges are the same regardless of locale, such as participation amongst the membership, budgeting and facing a competitive marketplace. Keep me informed of the functions your Affiliate Organization is planning so that I can help promote them and stay involved with your activities. You can contact me at clint@redangus.org. Also, please check the contact information listed on the website (www.redangus.org) under the Affiliate Association link and let me know if anything needs updating. This is critical to allow communication to spread between the Affiliates and the National Office.

One suggestion I've received from different Affiliates is the desire to increase the choice of ads available to utilize in the Coop Ad Program.

Currently the program cost shares on printed publication ads. Several Affiliate Members have expressed an interest in expanding the program to include electronic advertising and promotional materials designed for use at trade shows, field days and/or cattle sales. I'm trying to expand the programs cost share options to include these materials.

On a different note, we are working to improve the layout, content and overall efficiency of the website. If you have suggestions on changes you would like to see, comments on how you would like the website to function or ideas to make it better, please contact me. I'm always excited to get fresh ideas from the membership. The website is Red Angus's first impression to new customers and the most heavily utilized resource of our membership. We are planning to simplify the design to help increase its usage and effectiveness. This will entail less man hours spent on hard copy paperwork and question answering, allowing the RAAA Staff to concentrate on other tasks to promote Red Angus and speed up the processing of registrations, transfers and data processing. A new and improved website will attract new customers and allow them to search for answers to questions they have about Red Angus genetics.

If you have not already done so, I'd encourage each of you to go to the website to visit the Red Angus Stockyards. It has been overhauled to become more user friendly and effective. This was one of the first steps accomplished in the remodel-

Pulling Together to Promote Red Angus!

ing of the website. You are now able to view or list commercial females (Pro-Cow), registered females, registered bulls and/or Red Angus genetics (semen and/or embryos). You are even welcome to list cattle that are consigned to a sale, for instance a set of commercial heifers scheduled to sell on a video market or a group of registered females consigned to a purebred sale. Just list the sale dates along with the other contact and animal information so that a buyer knows when and where the cattle will be selling. You should include in your listing whether or not you are willing to sell the animals privately or if the buyer must bid on the animals at the sale. The purpose of the Stockyards is to connect buyers and sellers with this free service. It's simply another way to add value to our product.

Following the 2007 Young Guns Conference held in Denton in July, a forum was created to initiate discussion amongst the members of the group. The topics change frequently and enable each user to post an answer or create another question to be fielded by the group. The forum provides an avenue for ideas to be developed and expanded upon while stirring interaction from individuals. Establishing an Affiliate Organization Forum is a possibility. This would enable the officers to brainstorm, exchange effective ideas and increase the opportunity for participation in the group.

Another way to increase communication amongst the membership is the creation of an E - News Letter. It will be sent to the RAAA membership, industry partners and our customers. An E-News Letter allows information to be distributed and updated on a frequent basis, while encouraging a response from its readers. Creating an environment that stimulates discussion and encourages education by allowing the most recent information to be viewed by the audience.

I'm excited to be a member of the Red Angus team and am humbled by the opportunity to work for the Association. Feel free to contact me with questions or comments involving the Affiliate Organizations, membership, communications, website usage and design, female consignment sales and/or anything else I can help you with. ■