

## RAAA Board of Directors

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# Board Commentary

by Joe Mushrush, 2nd Vice President / District 6 Director

## Red Angus Opportunity in the Ethanol Age

I've heard it said that the Chinese word for 'crisis' is written with two marks. One stands for danger and the other opportunity.

You don't have to read more than three pages of any ag publication these days to get someone's opinion of the pending 'crisis' facing livestock production. The ethanol mandate is causing explosive results in the corn market, which coupled with a weak dollar, has input costs going through the roof. Experts proclaim there won't be any relief until technology is developed to cheaply turn cellulose into energy.

Folks, we have that capability today and it is called a Beef Cow. This ability to utilize cellulose puts us at a great advantage over other protein producing species. Can you imagine trying to run a set of broiler chickens on corn stubble with a hot wire?

Red Angus users are uniquely poised to take advantage of a minimal input approach. Not only does our breed as a whole possess the biological type to thrive on limited supplement regimes, we have the tools to identify those cattle within our breed that will do it the best. The Red Angus Maintenance Energy EPD is the only energy use EPD among the major beef breeds that

incorporates body condition score as well as mature weight into the calculation. A 1250 pound cow with a BCS of 4 is not the same animal as a 1250 pound BCS 7 cow. Red Angus recognizes that fact.

These efficiencies don't stop with the cow. America's love affair with corn fed, well marbled beef isn't going to end abruptly. Granted, the faster gaining, larger framed type cattle

have an edge on pound of gain per pound of feed in the feedlot. But they must go on feed at a younger age and spend more total days on feed to reach the quality consumers demand.

In the third century B.C. the Greek orator Demosthenes, who I'm sure would have been a user of Red Angus genetics if he could have just found a good source,

summed up our position when he stated, "Small opportunities are often the beginning of great enterprises".

At the end of the day, Red Angus feeders take a smaller pile of corn to reach acceptable quality grades and Red Angus cows take a smaller pile of supplemental feed to produce that calf. That is our great competitive advantage in the production of protein in the ethanol age.

Now is the time to seize the opportunity. ■

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