



Marketing Update



CERTIFIED RED ANGUS

Pro-Cow

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More Bang for your Buck...

Producers who use ear tags to identify their calves find that there are a multitude of choices. While differences exist in design and to a lesser extent price, tremendous diversity exists in the total value represented by various tagging systems.

For years, tag manufacturers have developed their products for the purpose of animal identification as it pertains to management at the farm, ranch, or feed yard. In addition to individual animal identification, these tags often identify location - such as a pen number at a feed yard, parentage - many calves are tagged with their dam's id number, or birth order - many calves are tagged with the year and sequence of their birth. Whatever system is employed, full value for the producers' investment in plastic is best obtained when the tag utilized comes with the added value of expanded market access.



Since 1994, the official yellow Red Angus Feeder Calf Certification Program (FCCP) tag has identified Red Angus influenced calves as USDA process verified with the claims of traceability to a minimum of 50 percent Red Angus bloodlines and Source verification to ranch of origin. Today, the FCCP carries the additional USDA process verified claim of group age verification, which is necessary to identify eligibility for export trade.

The demand for export eligible cattle still exceeds their supply. With many packers' age/source premiums meeting and some exceeding \$25 per head, it is obvious why producers are enrolling cattle in the FCCP at record pace. We often think of the high quality primal cuts as items where US Beef has no equal on the export market. While this is true, Age Verification has the potential to add value to all eligible carcasses as export markets often place far greater value on beef cuts that are not popular in this country. For example, a tongue

in this country is worth about \$1, but in Japan...over \$12. The same advantage holds - although the ratio of value may differ - for Short plates, Short ribs, Intestine, Chuck roll, etc.

Additionally, Age Verification doesn't just add value to fed cattle; age verified calves have averaged an additional \$1.77 per cwt during Superior Livestock Auction's 2006 season. Of course, there is much more value available through the FCCP tag than merely age verification, as it qualifies cattle for the genetic component of several Angus product lines...Pretty good for something that many producers buy anyway and only costs a buck.

Kill two birds with one stone...the Red Angus FCCP tag doubles as a management tag. The tag comes with a large blank area, where producers can write calf id's, pen numbers, birth dates, sire codes, etc. Or, for 10¢ more, producers can have tags pre-printed with their own management numbers. Email in a list of cow ID numbers and the tags can be pre-printed to match the soon to be born calves to their dams. Any numbering system a producer wants to use is limited only by the approximately 1 inch tall by 3 inch wide blank area of the Temple Herdsman tag.

Do I need an RFID tag?

For Age and Source Verification, NO. However, there are various retained ownership programs and other marketing alliances where an RFID tag is required. In such cases, the FCCP offers an excellent solution.

Shown on the right is the same tamperproof, yellow herdsman tag only paired with an RFID tag. The Red Angus FCCP RFID tag uses the Digital Angel technology that was the first approved by USDA for NAIS. These tags are shipped connected together, the visual tag has the 15 digit RFID number printed on its backside, and producers are provided with an electronic cross reference in the event that a tag is lost, and they need to identify by either the 15 digit RFID number or the 7



digit FCCP serial number. Additionally, that same cross reference is maintained at the tag manufacturer and Red Angus headquarters, where it is tied to the ranch of origin and the date of birth of the first calf born in the enrollment group. The important thing to remember is: regardless of the tag option a producer chooses; visual tag only or visual tag plus RFID combo set - all FCCP enrolled cattle carry the USDA Process Verified Claims of:



Traceability to at least 50% Red Angus Bloodlines
Source Verified to Ranch of Origin
Group Age Verified

What about the paper trail?

Good Question. Once a producer goes through the enrollment process, has received their FCCP tags, and finished tagging their calf crop, they need to complete and return the FCCP Supplier Enrollment Agreement. This is very important because it is this document that ties the range of tags used to the date of birth provided by the producer. Once Red Angus receives the supplier enrollment agreement, a **Certificate of Compliance** is available upon request, and serves as the USDA approved documentation that ties a range of tag numbers to a date of birth and a ranch of origin.

Should producers marketing calves request the certificate of compliance prior to the sale?

Absolutely! Once a producer has gone to the trouble of enrolling their crop and tagging their calves...the rest is all downhill. Besides, being in a position to provide added value documentation to the buyer will go a long way towards developing a reputation that should reap dividends on subsequent sales and calf crops.

So, when is an ear tag more than a piece of plastic that a calf's id number can be written on?

When it is a Red Angus FCCP tag that packages herd management with the increased market access available through verification of Red Angus bloodlines, source verification to the ranch of origin, and group age verification. ■