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Association Commentary

by Dawn Bernhard, JRA National Advisor

Working For The Common Good

"Let's all work for the common good." How many times have you heard this phrase during this presidential election year? But, what does it mean? What is "the common good"? The definition will be as varied as the people whom you ask- but for this Red Angus discussion, common good is a mutually beneficial result which is shared by all.

For Red Angus, the common good should be our end product - healthy, tasty beef. Let's consider, though, what the end product of a variety of segments within our breed and industry may be:

Seedstock producer: dependable, consistent genetics for producing cattle for use within herd and in demand by current and potential customers; Commercial producer: dependable, consistent genetics for producing cattle in demand by current and potential customers with emphasis on the traits at which Red Angus excels - maternal and reproductive excellence as well as carcass quality and efficiency. Cattle feeder: dependable, consistent, healthy, rapid gaining, efficient, docile cattle to thrive in the feedlot environment. Packer: dependable, consistent supply of high quality carcasses with acceptable yield grade. Consumer: dependable, consistent, healthy, tasteful product. Junior member: dependable programs and events for reaching personal growth and leadership potential while meeting others in the industry. Regular member: dependable, consistent services for identifying and producing a targeted end product - customer service as well as expertise in areas of genetic evaluation, promotions and marketing. RAAA Board member: decisions, policies and programs that support the growth of the breed, the financial well-being of members and the Association.

How can we work for the common good, when it seems to have so many definitions? Our founding members recognized the attributes of a relevant cattle breed and worked together to develop the core policies and genetics that shaped Red Angus. Following the example of those original breeders, the RAAA strives to assist membership in achieving the common good by:

Maintaining a focus on the demands and needs of the commercial sector.

Staying true to the core policies established over 50 years ago. Realizing the seedstock segment of our industry supplies the needs of the commercial producer. Publishing EPD's with a sound basis and focus on economically relevant traits. Maintaining open communication with members on issues important to Red Angus, i.e. initiating GPS, identifying genetic defects, and providing education for producers in a variety of areas. Providing member services through registrations, transfers, promotions and advertising. Realizing the importance of the JRA programs. Honoring the achievement and contributions of members, industry associates and staff.

So, how can you work for the common good? You can continue as an advocate of the strengths of Red Angus. Become more actively involved in your Association! Volunteer to sit on one of the RAAA Standing Committees - have your voice heard on areas of special interest; volunteer to host a field day; mentor a junior Red Angus enthusiast; attend National Convention, National Show, Brain Trust or other Red Angus event; consign cattle to your state or regional sale; host a stop for juniors on Round-Up; support promotions and advertising efforts in your state or region; identify, age and source verify your cattle with FCCP tags...the list is endless.

Bear in mind, the common good is worked toward and enjoyed by all involved. During the coming year, take time to appreciate the skills, talents and contributions made by each segment within our breed - focusing on those attributes of the people and the cattle that propel us to reach goals.

From the humble beginnings of a recessive color gene that was recognized and appreciated by a group of forward-thinking, progressive breeders who were determined to chart a different course, Red Angus have flourished and taken a place among the most competitive breeds in the world. Competitive in terms of earning a place in the industry by providing the reproductive, maternal and carcass quality traits necessary to excel for the seedstock producer, commercial producer, feeder, and packer. And, by winning over the consumer who demands a dependable, consistent, high quality eating experience. Now, that is the common good! ■