

## RAAA Board of Directors

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# Board Commentary

by Kelli Brown, RAAA President

The internet has become a fascinating, educational, and promotional tool for many in our industry today. How many folks in our breed and industry around the world have pondered over not only how to have a web presence but what it should look like and feel like? Recently, I learned that “dot com” is simply a short acronym for “dot commercial” and it started a thought process about how we as breeders develop and carry out Red Angus commercials everyday.

Our National Show was held this fall in beautiful and snowy Billings during the NILE. The Montana contingency did a fine job of hosting our annual event. As I wandered through the barn, visiting with several breeders and analyzing some amazing cattle, I couldn't help but be proud of the quality and depth of the breeds' display.

Allow me to diverge for just a moment to our history book. As early as 1957, our founders formed a show committee to evaluate methods of exhibiting cattle to keep with the new Association's philosophies. At the first National Show in 1959, the Association pioneered the incorporation of performance data into their shows to make them more reflective of the overall goals and standards of the breed. Obviously, this wasn't the norm then or now in the industry, nor was performance testing in general. C.T. Parker describes those first few shows by noting that entries were divided first of all by performance data into three groups (Blue, Red and White). The show cards of the animals were so marked. Cattle were then judged for conformation. The judge could place them as he wished, however, animals with a White Card (the least desirable performance data), could not win the class. The other stipulation was that only Blue Cards (the best performance data), would be allowed to show in the Grand Drive ensuring that the Grand Champion was not only pleasing to the eye of the judge on conformation, but also an animal with outstanding performance data. With the onset of EPDs, it became easier to incorporate performance information in

the show ring, even though cattle may be raised in different herds and environments.

Now, fast forward fifty years. Although many things have changed in the industry, the Red Angus Association continues to hold on to the core of the ideals from our founders. The continual use of combining EPDs and phenotype is part of what differentiates us from other competitive seedstock sources. Our structure allows both commercial cattleman and seedstock breeders an opportunity to evaluate the usefulness of our cattle and personally, I can think of two astute cattlemen who were converted to the breed because of what they saw and experienced with our cattle and people at a stock show.

On the contrary, what if we didn't have a presence in places like the National Western or Ft Worth? I am thankful to the many Red Angus breeders who take the time to prepare, travel and display cattle at stock shows throughout the country. It is not an easy road to journey or an inexpensive one as they are investing an average of \$1,000 per head exhibited. I am grateful that they are present and representing not only their brand, but the Red Angus brand as well. It is one of a number of ways, we can be “dot coms” for Red Angus.

Maybe you should consider a New Year's Resolution this year that includes being a “dot com” for our breed? Whether that be through showing at a local county show, standing in a booth for your state or regional affiliate at a Cattlemans Convention, helping organize a feeder calf sale or passing out promotional materials at an educational extension event, we can all play an instrumental part in telling the Red Angus story. And oh, by the way...when you're in Denver next month walking through the Yards, make sure you let those breeders know how much you appreciate their presence and passion for our breed!

*On behalf of your National Board, Merry Christmas. We invite you to join us for our annual Brain Trust Meeting, National Pen Show and the Open Show that will be held next month at the National Western in Denver. ■*