

## RAAA Board of Directors

### President

Kelli Brown  
Throckmorton, Texas  
kelli@rabrownranch.com

### 1st Vice President/ District 6 Director - Great Plains

Joe Mushrush  
Strong City, Kansas  
redcows@mushrushredangus.com

### 2nd Vice President/ District 4 Director-Southwest

Tom Woodward  
Omaha, Texas  
tomwoodward@brosecoranch.com

### Director Region A

Laurence Mendoza  
Valley Springs, California  
dzaredangus@yahoo.com

### Director Region B

Kim Ford  
Bertrand, Nebraska  
thefords@crossdiamondcattle.com

### Director Region C

Tommy Coley  
Birmingham, Iowa  
tcoley1952@aol.com

### District 1 Director - West

Rita McPhee  
Lodi, California  
info@mcpheeredangus.com

### District 2 Director - Montana

Esther Fischer  
Harlowton, Montana  
fischerra@mtintouch.net

### District 3 Director - Rocky Mountain

Forest Dunning  
Sheridan, Wyoming  
trreds@rangeweb.net

### District 5 Director - Northern Plains

Gary Jacobson  
Hitterdal, Minnesota  
gjrangus@feltontel.net

### District 7 Director - Northeast

Martin Morgan  
Leicester, North Carolina  
m.morgan@att.net

### District 8 Director - Southeast

Raymond Prescott  
Gray Court, South Carolina  
bullhill2@mindspring.com

### District 9 Director - Midwest

Ryan Ludvigson  
Holstein, Iowa  
rl\_ludvigson@hotmail.com



# Board Commentary

by Kim Ford, Director Region B

## An Organization Of People With A Common Purpose

My husband, Scott, and I have two children—Johanna, five and Marie, two. Johanna will start school this fall, which puts us all on the brink of a huge transition. Marie, being two, puts us on the brink of hysterics—whether from laughter or frustration. Any of you who have ever lived with, taught or passed within 100 yards of a two-year-old will probably be familiar with this phrase: “I do it myself!”

We live the struggle everyday—from putting on socks and shoes to climbing in and out of the pickup—any attempt at assistance is greeted with an emphatic, “I do it myself!” This independence and assertiveness is healthy, I know, but doesn’t necessarily lead to my getting things done as efficiently as I dream. At worst, we’re all frustrated; but at the best, we’re all happy at independent learning and action.

We’re all independent—in action and thinking. I think that if you had ten people walk into a group of 200 heifers and choose half as replacements, you would have ten different lists of heifers to keep. Some would choose on pedigree, some on numbers, some on phenotype, some on disposition... the list goes on. So, just as our environments differ from one part of the country or the other, so do our tolerances and preferences for certain traits.

Now for the really great thing about our business: Even though we all have our own ideas about Red Angus and why we use them, we’re all together in the Red Angus Association of America (RAAA). The Random House dictionary defines ‘association’ as follows, “An organization of people with a common purpose.” I think we can all

agree that we are true believers in the Red Angus breed and share a common purpose of successfully using Red Angus in our breeding programs. To paraphrase the RAAA mission statement, we’re all trying to enhance the ‘quality, reliability and value of Red Angus cattle.’ Through this association, we each have an immediate connection to other cattlemen—both commercial and purebred breeders. I’m talking about the “big picture” of association, here. Each individual cattle producer is an integral part of the RAAA as a whole. We’re all in this together, working independently, but associated with each other to again-- enhance the quality, reliability and value of our cattle.

Many times, when I hear people talking about “the Association,” they are referring to the employees of the RAAA. These are undoubtedly some of the most qualified, dedicated and knowledgeable people in the industry. But these individuals are only one part of the bigger whole. Each of us is “the Association.” It takes all of us working together, in our own way, for the greater good of the breed.

Because of this association with fellow cattlemen and cattlemen, there are many segments of the business that we don’t have to do ourselves. We have a built-in safety net of people and services to help out with our businesses. The RAAA has a smorgasbord of programs to grab onto to make life easier for producers.

One program that comes to mind right away is the FCCP. With the implementation of country of origin labeling (COOL), the RAAA already had our backs with the age and source verified program and tagging system. The same program that many producers have been using

## Association Commentary

already has the equipment to meet COOL requirements. For producers looking for electronic identification and a verification system, the answer is right here—for an affordable price.

Genetic defects have been a big topic for the past year. Questions abound as osteopetrosis (OS), a genetic defect which has been present in Angus cattle, black and red, since the 1960's, is now manageable via DNA testing. Again, our Association has been a plus in education and identification of the defective gene. Several Red Angus stakeholders have stepped up to share their knowledge, foresight and good judgment in developing a test and implementing policy to deal with this issue.

A test is here and available for breeders to identify carriers of genetic defects and make breeding decisions accordingly. With the

development of the test for OS, each producer can assess the risk it poses to their herds. Some producers may decide their market dictates zero tolerance for carriers, while others will determine that a carrier possesses other positive characteristics that are worth propagating. The DNA test has provided us with another tool to use in selection—another tool as we all strive to make the best mother cow, replacement heifer, feedlot steer or herd bull—whatever our goals and programs may be. The independence of the individuals in our Association will lead to different courses of action in dealing with genetic defects.

Whether in preparing to send one daughter to school or watching as my other daughter triumphantly marches off with her shoes on the wrong feet, I'm faced daily with the challenges of providing the tools for my girls to walk forward confidently and boldly into life. I want them

to be armed with knowledge to grasp opportunities when they become available, and to recognize and avoid pitfalls when confronted with them.

I truly believe the RAAA has the same capacity for all of us, as producers of Red Angus cattle. Through programs, information and relationships, we can gain knowledge and tools to position ourselves to capitalize on opportunities and to prepare for the storms—whatever they may be.

If you are able to read this, you are obviously developed enough to have moved beyond the, "I do it myself!" years (at least in putting on your shoes). I challenge you to continue your independence in your programs, but to also look to the RAAA for assistance in a variety of well-developed and valuable programs and services. ■