



# Auxiliary Notes

► by Shirley Williams, president, American Angus Auxiliary

## The inside story

*"Hear and you forget; see and you remember; do and you understand."*

— Chinese Proverb

### Focusing on purpose

Friends outside the cattle industry often ask me what it is that the Angus Auxiliary does. Actually, I asked that same question not too many years ago when I was invited to get involved in my state group and later, in a more in-depth manner, as I was stepping into an officer role on the national level. Wondering what purpose something serves is good. You certainly need to know before you get very involved, but until you get on the inside, it can be pretty hard to figure out!

It's kind of like looking at a cow in your pasture and trying to assume an accurate evaluation of beef quality based only on what you can see from the outside.

### On the outside looking in

A little more than a year ago, my daughter Elizabeth and I were both growing frustrated with her 4-H club. Most members of the group show steers, and every meeting seemed to consist of discussions of hair, or the lack of it, instead of what we should have been focusing on — the production of quality beef!

I used to raise halter Quarter Horses long ago, and I remember being discouraged that breeders and judges had decided that a halter

horse was supposed to look a certain way, regardless of what they were created to do. Have you ever watched a body builder move? We were creating a totally nonfunctional animal!

In the performance ring at the Quarter Horse shows, you'd see smoother-muscle, longer, leaner, athletic horses that moved effortlessly. Though they appeared to be a different breed, their different look was just a result of what they do, which was the original purpose of a Quarter Horse!

So now you see why it is so important to me to teach my daughter that it is the inside of beef cattle that should form the outside. That's how I got recruited to join with parents of a neighboring county to form a 4-H beef club.

### The ins and outs of the industry

We all agreed that "learning by doing" would best be started at the end product, so our first outing was to a retail meat market. The butcher explained to the kids what the customer was looking for in quality cuts of beef, and then he took us all to the freezer and showed us why both the size and the quality of the carcass matter to the efficiency and profit of his business.

Next, the kids came to our ranch to see a heifer that was about to be harvested. Standing in the pasture, all of us surveyed the shape of her hindquarters and took guesses at her degree of finish. Then we referred to a meat cuts chart and came to the conclusion that we really could not tell what she would grade and yield just by looking at her from the outside.

Three weeks later nine 4-Hers gathered to see the hanging carcass at the packing plant. Another leader brought enlarged photos of the heifer to remind us of when we'd last seen her — from the outside. The heifer had a 12-square-inch (sq.-in.) ribeye, and her 0.50-in. back fat cover was uniform; she marbled very well with a uniform texture. After we compared her to the other carcasses, they began asking more in-depth questions that only kids can come up with: What did you do

with her head? What happened to all of her skin?

We'd made a connection! What they had seen on the outside now fit her purpose — the quality and value only the inside of her could provide.

### Become an Angus industry "insider"

The American Angus Auxiliary's role is to support our breed Association and youth programs from the inside. Since its founding in 1952, we have focused on five areas of service: encouraging the promotion and consumption of beef, facilitating education, developing Angus youth, promoting the Angus breed, and organizing social programs and activities. Since becoming actively involved I have worked with members all across the country, all year long, on projects and programs that get those jobs done. Now I understand just how much the Auxiliary does on the "outside" that even we ourselves take for granted!

When the competition gets cookin' at the Auxiliary-sponsored All-American *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) Cook-Off, the Auxiliary is the fire underneath. When our most outstanding young people go away to college, an Auxiliary scholarship may help them get there. Our Achievement Awards make sure that all young people know that their hard work has been noticed and is admired. When juniors practice to make it to the finals of the National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest, the prize they covet is a silver bowl presented by the Auxiliary. When the Crystal and Silver Pitcher Awards are announced at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS), it is the Auxiliary who has recognized our nation's top young achievers. When Miss American Angus presents awards or gives a speech, it is because Auxiliary members were on the inside working to make it all happen. When you are invited to sit down to a fancy breakfast each November at the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE), the Auxiliary is your hostess.

Last month Auxiliary officers and members gathered in Saint Joseph, Mo., to review our progress and set goals, which we will present at our mid-year meeting on Thursday, July 21, at 11:30 a.m. during the NJAS in Denver, Colo. Come join us — when you hear what we have to report and see what we plan to do, you will understand just how important your time and talents can be to the Angus breed!

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