

The Power of Sharing

Angus women come together at the Angus Women Connected conference.

by Megan Silveira, managing editor

There's the old adage that "word of mouth" results in some of the best business; but for Allison Hermes' relationship with the beef industry, the saying rings true.

"I did not grow up in ag or cows," she confesses, noting that a childhood horse resulted in her love for the equine industry.

During her studies at Lamar Community College, an advisor pushed Allison towards a beef artificial insemination (AI) course.

"I went, and I ended up falling in love with it," she says.

But that wasn't the only bit of love in the air. While at college, Allison met her husband, Lucas.

Today, the pair lives in Sterling, Colo., where Lucas works for Parry Angus. While he helps the family run about 300 head of registered cattle, the operation has also helped the couple dip their toes in the business.

"We bought five bred heifers from them and become American Angus Association members," Allison explains. "That's kind of how I found out about the Angus Women Connected conference. Our very first *Angus Journal* came in the mail, and I was flipping through it and saw the article about applying for that."

On the other side of the country, Morgan Alexander also knew the application deadline was approaching. The Berryville, Va., cattlegirl has a backstory different from Allison's, but her excitement to attend the conference was the same.



Morgan grew up on a registered cow-calf operation, traveling both regionally and nationally to compete in the show ring as a National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) member.

"I joined the Auxiliary because my mom was already a member, and Virginia, at the time, was working to rebuild their state auxiliary," Morgan explains. "To be honest, it just seemed like the right step in my Angus journey and a way to remain involved."

Morgan remembered hearing stories about the Angus Women Connected conference, as her mom had attended the event 10 years ago.

Hosted by the American Angus Auxiliary and underwritten by the Angus Foundation, the Angus Women Connected conference has been bringing women in the Angus breed together to share industry knowledge and engage in networking for the past 14 years — and Morgan and Allison recently became a part

of that legacy. This year, they were two of 20 individuals selected for the event in Excelsior Springs, Mo., from April 8-10.

More than luck

When she applied to attend, Allison says she was struck with a sense of imposter syndrome. Though she was excited by the good news that she had been accepted, the lingering feelings remained. Arriving to the opening night of the event, Allison found she wasn't the only one who — incorrectly, she now admits — felt like maybe their acceptance had been a shot of good luck.

"Then, at the end," she says, "I kind of found out that's now what this whole thing was about. It's not who's been a member the longest or who has the most cows. It was getting women from all different walks of the Association together."

Morgan saw the event as the next level in her Angus career.

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Faith, Grit & Legacy

While math wasn't on the schedule for the 2026 Angus Women Connected conference in Excelsior Springs, Mo., Kayla Josefiak promised listeners she had the perfect equation for success during her keynote presentation.

Combine faith and grit, and you've unlocked the formula to build a lasting legacy.

"We are all women of the brand," she said. "And the women in this room, you are a special brand of people. You are individuals who wake up every day and do something that a lot of people in this world can't do — don't choose to do."

As a certified Christian life coach, a mom of four and a proud member of the Angus family, Josefiak has found purpose when she built a life around the Lord and her own determination. It wasn't an easy journey, but she said it's been worth it.

"I'm a storyteller by nature," she explained. "I'm going to tell you a couple stories that were absolutely pivotal to who I have become as a human being."

Faith first

Josefiak knows brands are proof that an individual has survived either extreme heat or extreme cold, and she has her own past to showcase that truth.

At the young of age 13, Josefiak knew what hardship was. It seemed sadness, she said, was her constant companion. She said she spent her entire high school career trying to understand why, but it wasn't until she turned 22 that she could put a label on it.

Josefiak said she had depression.

Fresh into her career as a high school biology teacher, dealing with small-town dynamics while being four hours away from home, Josefiak said she hit a breaking point. A visit to the doctor resulted in a prescription for Xanax®.

"I was sitting in my kitchen, and I had taken a pill and had the horrible thought of, 'Every person would just be better off if you would just take that whole bottle of pills,'" she recalls.

It might have been a text, her dog or even a car driving by, but regardless, Josefiak stood up and flushed every single one of those pills down the toilet.

"Now, you might be wondering why am I talking about this at a women's event, where we're learning about an incredible industry? It's because that is one of the very first times that I knew God was holding me."

Life carried on, and as Josefiak continued to lean on the Lord, she was able to witness how her family helped bring light back into her life.

Watching her daughter show as a 4-Her brought Josefiak back to the beef industry.

She remembers realizing, "I can be in the barn, and I can spend time there with my girls and I can spend time with cattle — a place where I feel God present so, so much."

Having a faith that got to her that moment, that allowed her to take the first step, was the foundational piece of Josefiak's legacy.

Gotta have grit

As a coach, a mom, a pusher, Josefiak said she's learned a good attitude is the perfect complement to a faithful soul.

"Grit is one of those things I believe everybody has. It's just if you want to access it or not," she said. "Grit by definition is courage, resolve. The perseverance in the face of hardship."

It's not an uncommon trait amongst those raised in the livestock business, she said, but she's watched how hereditary the characteristic can become.

With young children, there's the harsh reality that beef cattle have one ultimate purpose: to help feed the nation.

When each of Josefiak's young children expressed interest in showing cattle, it was her job to relay that truth to them. Though the message was received with a hint of sadness, the kids weren't dissuaded from their mission.

Josefiak embarked on a new career as a stock show mom, and although there were tears when the steers were loaded at the end of the year — from showmen and parents alike — her kids never balked from their responsibilities.

She hopes it's some of her own choices that inspired that kind of dedication. By sharing her own stories with family and strangers alike, Josefiak is building a legacy that will be remembered for years to come.

She said, "There will be generations of people who do not know who you are. They might know what you look like if they still have the internet ... They're not going to know who you are, but they will have faith and they will have grit because of how you choose to live today."

Legacies aren't built on the amount of acreage left to one's name or even with a herd that has the most desirable set of EPDs. They're the result of people — women — who are brave enough to share what faith and grit have done for them.

"If you've ever felt your soul crushed by this industry or by anything in your life, that's because this is not for the weak," Josefiak said. "Every single woman ... has a story that they can share, and that's great. That is courage. That is your faith made visible."

“Much like the LEAD conference when I was a junior member, I saw the Angus Women Connected conference as a fun time to build relationships, learn more about Angus and the industry, and simply have a good time without cattle,” she explains.

The event schedule introduced participants to the different entities and programs under the umbrella of the American Angus Association and brought them to headquarters in Saint Joseph, Mo., but for both women, it was personal conversation that made the days so special.

Morgan’s family sells show calves and beef locally, and while she qualifies their program as “a small operation,” the presentations all contained pieces of advice she could apply back home.

“I really enjoyed learning about all that Angus Media has to offer,” Morgan says, using the marketing arm of the team in Saint Joseph, Mo., as one example. “I sat there thinking about how I could help my parents update the website they do have — how updating the farm logo, colors, theme and accessibility would be helpful to get things to the 21st century.”

From the dinner on the first night to the final hours spent in Saint Joseph at the Association’s headquarters, Allison says the passion for the breed was almost palpable among the staff.

“My favorite part was definitely AGI (Angus Genetics Inc.),” Allison adds. “I’m kind of a science nerd.”

It wasn’t just the transparency about the entity and its research initiatives that stood out, however. Allison also was able to take some practical knowledge back to Colorado for their family’s growing herd: the value of the planned mating tool.



“We even used it yesterday,” she says, just a couple of weeks after the event. “I went home with my husband and I was like, ‘Look at this. We don’t have to do the math ourselves [to determine parent averages on potential matings].’”

Get involved

With the future looking bright, Allison is quick to encourage others to apply for the Angus Women Connected conference — she urges them to banish any bit of impostor syndrome and realize that this event is designed for them.

“Just do it,” she says. “Don’t have any thoughts of, ‘I don’t have a generational ranch to return to,’ or ‘I don’t have the knowledge.’”

With Allison’s own sense of pride in being a first-generation registered Angus breeder reignited, she’s also happy to say she’s adding the title of American Angus Auxiliary member to her résumé.

Morgan herself sees it as a great option for former NJAA members who want to keep Angus as an integral part of their lives.



“Aging out of showing can feel like a weird shift, but it also feels like the right timing,” she says. “No matter where your dreams, career or life passions may take you, there are ways to remain involved in the [American] Angus Association and to give back to the associations that helped build you into who you are today.”

Both Allison and Morgan are eager to see what comes next for their roles within the Auxiliary, especially in supporting the next generation of cattlemen and women.

And, just maybe, they’ll be the ones sharing the Angus story that inspires another future Angus breeder. **AJ**