

# The Angus Connection

March 2025

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Association  
[www.vaangus.com](http://www.vaangus.com)

## A Letter From Your President...

*Walter Nichols*



Dear Members of the VA Angus Association,

I am writing to you today with immense pride and enthusiasm as the newly elected President of the VA Angus Association. It is a true honor to represent such a dedicated and passionate group of individuals involved in the Angus breed. I am deeply committed to serving our members, working collaboratively to advance the interests of the VA Angus industry, and ensuring our association remains a vital force within the agricultural landscape of Virginia.

My vision for the VA Angus Association is clear: to make it an \*indispensable\* resource for each and every one of our members – a trusted partner in your success, a source of valuable information and support, and a powerful advocate for the Angus breed. I believe this can be achieved by focusing on enhancing the value of membership through a combination of improving existing benefits, adding new and innovative offerings, and fostering a strong sense of community among our members.

I recognize the rich history and strong foundation of our association, built by the hard work and dedication of those who came before us. I am excited to build upon that success, working alongside you to address the challenges and seize the opportunities that lie ahead. Open communication and collaboration are absolutely essential to this process, and I want to hear directly

from you about how we can best serve your needs. Therefore, I am asking for your input on the following key areas:

- What current benefits do you find most valuable, and why?
  - Are there any aspects of these benefits that could be improved or streamlined?
  - What are we doing well that we should continue?
  - What additional benefits would make your membership even more worthwhile?
- Think broadly and creatively! Consider areas like:
- Opportunities to showcase your cattle, promote your farm, and reach potential buyers.
  - Workshops, seminars, webinars, and online resources on topics such as genetics, animal health, nutrition, and farm management.
  - Sharing best practices, and learning from experienced mentors.
  - Discounts on supplies, access to industry experts, and information on available grants and programs.
  - Representing the interests of Angus breeders at the state and local levels.
  - What are the most pressing challenges you face in your Angus operations, and how can the association help you overcome them?
  - Are there emerging trends or market opportunities that we should be exploring together?
  - What are your long-term visions for the VA Angus industry, and how can the association play a key role in achieving them?

# A Letter from Your President, cont.

• What kind of legacy do we want to leave for future generations of Angus breeders?

I am particularly interested in exploring opportunities the members may have. Your feedback will be absolutely crucial in determining the most effective and impactful ways to enhance our offerings and make the VA Angus Association truly indispensable.

We are planning to hold a Field Day. We need to know if the interest is still there. This event will be a fantastic opportunity for members to connect, learn, and showcase their cattle. To make this field day a resounding success, we need your help! I am calling for volunteers to form a Field Day Committee. If you are interested in contributing your time and expertise to planning and organizing this important

event, please contact me by email [nicholsfarmo@gail.com](mailto:nicholsfarmo@gail.com).

The Gift Sale is a premier event showcasing the finest Angus genetics and serves as an important fundraising opportunity for the VA Angus Association. The sale is to be held on April 17th 12:00 PM during the VIRGINIA BEEF EXPO at the ROCKINGHAM CO. FAIRGROUNDS. Consignment cattle for the sale must be submitted by March 7th. Your participation in this event, either as a consignor or a buyer, is vital to its success and directly supports our association's programs and initiatives. If you are planning to consign cattle to the, please remember that entries must be received by March 7th. Contact Stefanie Manbeck for more info.

To ensure that your voice is heard on all matters, we will be implementing

several feedback mechanisms. In addition to replying to this email, I encourage you to Contact me directly by phone or text at (540)875-7384 or email at [nicholsfarmo@gmail.com](mailto:nicholsfarmo@gmail.com) or any board member or Stefanie Manbeck. I am committed to actively listening to your feedback, carefully considering your recommendations, and incorporating them into our strategic planning process. I believe that by working together, with open communication and a shared vision, we can strengthen the VA Angus Association, make it an indispensable asset to our members, and ensure its continued success and positive impact on the Virginia Angus industry for generations to come. I look forward to connecting with you all in the near future.

## VAA Annual Meeting Wrap Up

The Annual Meeting & Awards Banquet was held February 22nd in Lynchburg. Thank you to all who attended! Thank you to our speakers Sydney Tuckwiller & Paige Pratt who spoke on Selection for Profitability and our panelists Brandon Reeves, Matthew Lohr & Mario Ferruzzi who discussed the future of Agriculture in Virginia for Virginia Youth & Virginia's Agricultural Economy. The speakers & panelists were well received and we hope to bring these talks back for the 2026 meeting!

Paul Bennett gave us an American Angus update after their February 2025 Board meeting.

Several changes to the National Cattle Evaluation will take place this May, along with the annual updates. Functional Longevity, Teat and Udder EPDs will move from research to

production EPDs and will be included in Maternal Weaned Calf Value (\$M). Being able to enhance these tools has been a goal of the board for years and is only possible through the commitment breeders have made to whole herd reporting where we now have nearly 170,000 females enrolled.

The Certified Angus Beef team shared an extensive supply analysis, including trends affecting brand acceptance. To remain relevant to the industry as carcass sizes continue to increase, we voted to increase the CAB ribeye specification to a maximum of 17 square inches—up from 16. The change will go into effect as soon as coordination with industry partners can be completed.

BEEF Academy has launched a pilot program with ag teachers to

teach the curriculum in classrooms across the country. We plan to launch to all classrooms this fall. The communications team will refresh the national advertising campaign in the coming months with continued focus on registered Angus and the tools available to your commercial cattlemen customers.

Last fall, AGI led an industry discussion between breeders, allied industry and researchers at the Imagine Forum. One result of that meeting was a recently-released a white paper, "Exploring Next-Generation Phenotyping that Drives Profitability," written by Dr. Troy Rowan, University of Tennessee. This can be found on [Angus.org](http://Angus.org)





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knollcrest@knollcrestfarm.com

www.knollcrestfarm.com

# Virginia Angus Association 2025 Membership Form

644 Greenville Ave #220, Staunton, VA 24401

Email: VAAngus1933@Gmail.com

Please check the box next to which type of membership you would like to have:

- Category I            Commercial Breeders            \$50.00
- Category II            Purebred Breeders            \$100.00
- Category III            Sustaining Membership – No Cattle    \$50.00
- Category IV            Farm & Ranch Membership\*            \$250.00  
(Joint memberships for up to 3 households)
- Add Virginia Cattlemen's Association Affiliate Membership    +\$30.00  
((\$20 savings when joining through VAA)

- If your contact info is the same as last year, check this box, sign and return with payment.**

**Otherwise, complete the following, sign and return with payment.**

\*Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

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2025 Sale/Event Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Since 1998, the Angus Foundation has championed the success of Angus youth by investing in their education. In the past 27 years, the Angus Foundation has awarded more than \$4.9 million in scholarships including \$388,500 in 2024 alone. These scholarships help support students in their educational endeavors — whether pursuing undergraduate, graduate or trade degrees. Applications are due by May 1, offering an opportunity for Angus youth to receive financial support for their education. To learn more or apply visit [angus.org/foundation/apply-for-scholarships](https://angus.org/foundation/apply-for-scholarships)

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Peter: (757) 298-6300 - [peter@hendersoninc.com](mailto:peter@hendersoninc.com)

Doug: (804) 332-1456 - [wdouglasharris@verizon.net](mailto:wdouglasharris@verizon.net)

Olivia: (540) 892-4447 - [olivia@hendersoninc.com](mailto:olivia@hendersoninc.com)



# 2025 Handbook

## Virginia Angus Association

**Full Page**  
**Live Area:**  
**4.5" x 7.5"**

**Trim Size**  
**5.5" x 8.5"**

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**1/6 Page**  
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**1/4 Page**  
**4.5" x 1.875"**

**1/2 Page**  
**4.5" x 3.5"**

**We are hard at work to continue the tradition of making the Virginia Angus Handbook one of the best association handbooks in the country. Handbooks are distributed to members, producers attending sales in Virginia and neighboring states and field days along with new breeders buying their first cattle. We pledge to distribute as many or more as last year to keep as many breeders as possible aware of Angus activities in Virginia as well as the great breeders that make up our association.**

Copy deadline for Summer distribution -  
April 1, 2025

The entire handbook prints in full color

Rates:

Full Page .....	\$400
1/2 Page .....	\$250
1/4 Page .....	\$175
1/6 Page .....	\$150

AD Dimensions

Live size 4.5"w x 7.5"h

Trim size 5.5"w x 8.5"h

Full bleeds available (allow 1/8" larger than trim)

Line screen 300dpi

- All colors should be converted to CMYK (no pantones or RGB)
- Only PDF files are accepted and should be press quality (300dpi)

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# *Congratulations To Our Annual Award Winners!*

Handbook Dedication: T.D. Steele

Hall of Merit: Dr. Ike Eller

Cattleman of the Year: Dennis Pearson

Commerical Cattleman of the Year: James Keane

Promotor of the Year: Doug Harris

Seedstock Producer of the Year: Mystic Hill Farms

Angus Family of the Year: The McCall Family

Herdsman of the Year: Chase Wilson, Point Pleasant Farm

Manager of the Year: Olivia Thompson, Edgewood Angus

Distinguished Service: Virginia & Paul Coleman Jr.

Bartenslaughter Award: Lawson Family Farms

Past President: Scott Bennett

## *Junior Awards*

Premier Exhibitor Junior: Ella Jane Michael

Premier Exhibitor Senior: Madison Stratton

William Stokes Award: Madison Stratton

Outstanding Junior Member: Ella Jane Michael

Outstanding Senior Member: Aubrey Herbers

# *Save The Date!*

## **2025 VIRGINIA ANGUS GIFT SALE**

### **APRIL 17, 2025 - 12 P.M.**

### **AT THE VA BEEF EXPO - HARRISONBURG, VA**



• Since 1955 •

# 46TH ANNUAL SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA PERFORMANCE TESTED BULL SALE

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Sale Location: APEX Building at Hitachi Energy Arena grounds (APEX Center),  
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# A Cattlemen's Balancing Act

## *Cattlemen discuss the art of selecting traits for progress in their individual herds*

Sometimes being a cattleman feels like walking up to a buffet with endless options. Where do I start? Should I focus on the big picture or the details? How do I focus on just one thing?

Through educational sessions sponsored by the Colorado Angus Association at the 2025 National Western Stock Show, industry experts and boots-on-the-ground cattlemen discussed the value of balancing trait selection to achieve forward progress.

The session kicked off with a presentation by Kara Lee, director of producer engagement at Certified Angus Beef (CAB), followed by a panel discussion. The panel was comprised of moderator Kevin Ochsner, host of Cattlemen to Cattlemen on RFD TV, and industry perspectives including — David Brown of Montana Angus Ranch, Darrell Stevenson of Stevenson Angus, Anton Hermes of Hermes Livestock who is also an ABS Global representative, and Oakley Kelley, herd manager of Double RL Ranch.

The American Angus Association® offers a suite of 30+ EPDs and dollar indexes to help measure an animal's performance. But what's top priority when given such vast information? For Stevenson, the nucleus of the herd is the cow, and every input should focus on her continuous improvement.

"I believe first and foremost, those females have got to look the part, and then we've got the advantage, the art and the science and the genomically-enhanced EPDs that makes things even easier," Stevenson said. "Today, we can move these cattle farther and faster than ever before, we just need to know where to govern that out."

When asked how producers can use particular EPDs to find optimums and maximums, Kelley encouraged his approach of finding a baseline before setting long-term goals.

"As somebody that is really focusing on high quality ribeye, we have to have a baseline," Kelley said. "You need to figure your baseline and then figure out how fast and how far you want to proceed and over how many years."

In addition to EPD indexes, Association programs like Targeting the Brand™, AngusLink™ and the Genetic Merit Scorecard™ allow commercial cattlemen to capitalize on the marketing value of their product.

Stevenson remarked, his customer-base magnetized to genetic testing and these programs because of their capabilities as a section tool, a scoring tool, a culling tool and ultimately as a profiting tool.

"Customers latch on to the feeder calf marketing program and for me, the AngusLink program, because it's provided a tremendous amount of opportunity," Stevenson said. "Start with genomic testing, whole-herd or replacement-type female selection and then tie yourself to a marketing program — these guys have seen tremendous results creating margin."

Striking balance isn't just for the seedstock procurers, commercial cattlemen can tap into it too.

"They want to get from calving season to weaning time to getting their check. It's a bad cycle. We've got to change that mindset to where everybody is thinking about the future," Hermes said. "When you want to be sustainable in the cattle industry, whether you're a seedstock guy or a commercial cow-calf producer, you've got to take a balanced approach."

Rest assured this balance all serves a greater purpose — the consumer. After all, the demand for high-quality beef drives our industry, Kelley said.

"They want taste, they want quality, they want consistency," he said. "What we learned with our herd was we couldn't

just chase carcass, we had to go back to the female. The female had to make the herd, and I think that's our emphasis now is building that maternal cow herd, but not sacrificing carcass traits."

That inclusion of carcass traits leaves room for increased revenue for producers. Lee brought to attention the opportunity for marbling selection to increase profit, analyzing data showing it as largely the number one reason Certified Angus Beef® brand candidates don't make it across the finish line.

"That's why we talk about marbling so much, it's not because we're encouraging single-trait selection," she said. "We talk about marbling because it's the number one place that we're leaving money on the table."

It does not have to be an either-or decision with maternal and carcass traits, Lee said. In particular, she also addressed recent concerns that emphasis on marbling has led to decline in fertility and foot structure. Lee referenced recent disposal code data from the American Angus Association® showcasing animals removed for either fertility or foot structure purposes, which spanned a wide range of both high and low marbling cattle.

With the diversity in the Angus breed, balanced trait selection is possible, she said. It all comes back to the balanced approach, regardless of your industry sector. Balance in your selection criteria, balance in your focus level and balancing the ever-evolving demands of the consumer.

"When we think about our customer first — whether you're breeding bulls and thinking about your commercial cow-calf customers coming to buy those registered bulls, or you think about the end consumer — you're thinking about the end in mind," Lee said.

# 2025 Pathfinder Release

February 6, 2025

The 2025 Pathfinder report is now available.

To view your Pathfinder certificates, go to your AAA Login account  
> Reports > Dam Report or Sire Report > Pathfinder Awards.



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- Half page in each quarterly newsletter
- 6 free eblasts

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(\$800 value)

- Unlimited VAA Facebook posts advertising events
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- Unlimited events posted on VAA online & printed calendar
- Quarter page in each quarterly newsletter
- 4 free eblasts



# Virginia Angus Association

644 Greenville Ave #220  
Staunton, VA 24401  
vaangus1933@gmail.com

## Upcoming Events

March 7-8	MAJAC
March 22	BCIA Southwest Performance Tested Bull Sale
March 28	Miller Farm LLC & Friends Angus Production Sale
April 4	Pratt Cattle Company Spring Turnout Bull Sale
April 5	MC Livestock Spring Bull Sale
April 12	Knoll Crest Spring Bull & Female Sale
April 16-19	VA Beef Expo
April 17	VAA GIFT Sale at the VA Beef Expo
May 3	Whitestone Farm Bull & Female Sale
June 19-22	Eastern Regional Junior Angus Show