



CAB Corner on Quality  
(graphic file logo for heading  
available on request)

July 2006

## Students will be experts

By Christy Johnson, Supply Development Marketing Director

An *expert*, says Webster's dictionary, is one with the special skill or knowledge representing mastery of a particular subject. The dictionary often provides more than one definition for a word; so it is with *student*, first denoted as one who attends a school. I prefer the second meaning: one who studies: an attentive and systematic observer.

People bear more than one definition or label. Maybe you've been deemed an expert in the area of breeding superior Angus genetics. Best-case scenario, your customers gave you that label. But how do you keep it? If you don't see yourself as an expert and think no one else does, how can you become one?

Maybe the most logical way is to first become that attentive and systematic observer, so that you may acquire the knowledge necessary to be recognized as the expert your customers will rely on.

So, what do students need on the first day of class? Books or information sources. Since there are millions of books and Websites out there on almost every topic, let's narrow the search. You need something that will benefit your customers, whose primary goal is to buy Angus genetics that will make them profitable.

Remember a few years back how difficult it was to explain expected progeny differences (EPDs) and how to use them to select the right bull? Now, there's a new subject to master – the American Angus Association's dollar-value (\$Value) indexes for multiple-trait selection. Have you studied \$Value enough to be an expert to your customers?

Other than published works, what else do students need to help them learn? Teachers – after all, teachers are the masters of their subject and the experts in their field. In the purebred Angus business, who are your teachers?

Extension experts, Association staff, fellow breeders, veterinarians and nutritionists all have their areas of mastery that you can tap to benefit your business. How do you maintain contact with them and gain access to their wealth of knowledge?

What other important factor influences students' learning? Classroom or environment. If you don't feel comfortable in your environment, you're going to have a hard time learning. Plus, different environments provide different learning opportunities.

Topics covered at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association annual convention will differ from those covered at your breed or state livestock producers' events. Yet, all may provide valuable and timely information for you or your customers' operations.

Pop quiz:

- Q. You've been a good student and have gained expertise, so now what should you do?
- A. Be a teacher
  - B. Share your books
  - C. Provide a classroom
  - D. Continue to study
  - E. All of the above

If you answered, "E, all of the above," then you're headed in the right direction.

### **Be a teacher**

Do you remember those teachers who played a positive role in your life? Sure you do. Now envision yourself in that light with your customers. Ah, the power of sharing knowledge to benefit your students – your customers.

### **Share your books**

Once you've discovered valuable resources, share them. "You can close more business in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get people interested in you." —Dale Carnegie

### **Provide a classroom**

Your farm or ranch is a great resource, with your cattle as examples. Your production sale serves as a perfect classroom to pull like-minded cattlemen together to learn and discuss industry issues and trends. Take advantage of that opportunity.

### **Continue to study**

Attending industry events, reading beef publications, surfing the Web and keeping an open mind will generate ideas so that you can add to your expertise.

As you continue your role as both lifelong student and developing teacher, be sure to include CABpartners.com. The Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) mission is to increase demand for registered Angus cattle through a specification-based, branded beef program to identify consistent, high-quality beef with superior taste. In short, we're successful if you're successful.

That's why we fortify our Website with Black Ink Basics tech bulletins, an educational events calendar, licensed feedlot contacts and articles covering everything from technology to production philosophy.

Class dismissed. Now, go out and teach! I'm going to hit the books as a student again.

END