

North Carolina Angus Breeders Gather for Educational Events

By: Sharon Rogers, NCAA Executive Secretary

The NC Angus Association recently held its annual tour and field day in Lenoir, North Carolina. Association members, friends and special guests enjoyed two days of fellowship while learning more about the breed and the beef industry. This year's tour and field day were combined in an effort to allow more members the opportunity to attend both events.



Shade Tree Farm owned by John and Jessie Cassavaugh hosted the Friday afternoon seminar and tour. The new foot scoring system being implemented by the American Angus Association. Chris presented everyone with a guide describing the scoring system for the foot angle and claw set. Cow longevity in the herd is very important and soundness plays a critical role in her longevity, which Chris explained is why AAA is developing the foot scoring EPD. He also gave a brief history of how cattle at the Upper Piedmont Research Station in Reidsville were used in the initial development

of the scoring system. After his discussion everyone gathered to do some live foot scoring on a group of cattle from the Shade Tree herd. Seminar attendees were then given a chance to look at the foot angle and claw structure of each animal and determine the score. Then Chris lead the discussion on the score assigned to each animal and why that score was given. The workshop served as a great learning tool for everyone in attendance.



Next John gave the group a hay ride tour of his farm. Despite the drought this summer they are maintaining their cow herd in excellent condition. The grass was short but hopefully with some fall rain they will be able to stockpile some fescue for grazing in the winter. The group then made a stop at the show barn where John and Jessie's grandchildren and great grandchildren work hard with their

show animals. They had some very nice females on display, several have placed really well and been champions in many shows. The final stop of the tour was a scenic spot on the farm where you can view Grandfather and Table Rock Mountains from one of their pastures. Then everyone returned to the Cassavaugh's home for an outstanding meal of prime rib with all the fixins. It was a great day at Shade Tree Farm. A special thanks to the Cassavaugh family for all their hard work.



Saturday's field day was held at Evening Star Ranch also located in Lenoir, NC. Evening Star Ranch is owned by Tommy McGee and his family. They raise registered Angus cattle and world champion Tennessee Walking horses. Our field day program was held in the ranch's beautiful horse barn. In addition to enjoying the farm everyone also received a lot of valuable information to help improve their beef herds throughout the day. Bryan Blinson, NC Cattlemen's Association Executive Director, gave a brief overview of the state of the industry. He spoke to the group about the current market and the controversial "Waters of the US" EPA program. He stated it is more important than ever for cattle producer to work together to tell their positive stories to the consumer. Dr. Tonya Amen, Angus Genetic Inc., then discussed Angus genetic evaluations. Her initial presentation was a refresher course on EPD's and how to utilize them in our herds. In her second discussion, she went deeper into the genomic enhanced EPD's. Discussing the availability of the high density and low density testing and the fast, reliable genetic information that can be garnered from using this technology. She also explained the benefits of the GeneMax programs and the need for all Angus breeders to enroll their herds in the *MaternalPlus* program.



After a wonderful lunch of beef brisket. Dr. Daniel Poole, NCSU Animal Science, discussed the ongoing fescue research being conducted at NC State University. Dr. Poole gave an outline of all the research and researchers working on the fescue issue and its effects on cattle in the southeast. He emphasized his research focuses on the reproduction of the female but many other projects are looking at different

physiological functions of the animal. Dr. Poole's projects are still ongoing but he has already gained some valuable information on ways to reduce the fescue effect. He stressed that there is probably not a quick fix for our fescue challenges but he hopes his research will identify some selection tools and management strategies that will reduce the overall impact.



Also at the field day, Brooke Harward, NCAA Membership Committee Chairman distributed a brief survey for our members and guest. The hopes for the survey is to have members offer

ideas and suggestions to help shape the association in the future. A special thanks to Tommy McGee, his family and farm crew for all the hospitality. It was two busy days filled with great learning opportunities, along with the chance to catch up with old friends and make some new ones.