



NALF REPORT

by Mark Anderson
Executive Director
North American Limousin Foundation

It gives me great honor to join the Limousin family and I am grateful for this opportunity. As we look at where the beef industry has been and compare it to how the Limousin breed has progressed, I must applaud all of you. Feeder cattle are selling at record highs, replacement females are in strong demand and the breed is coming off an extremely profitable bull sale season. Yet, now is the time for exciting changes in the cattle industry and it is continuing to evolve. The Limousin breed must position itself to capitalize on the opportunities about to present themselves.

Commercial acceptance of the breed is key to increasing demand for Limousin cattle in terms of selling more bulls and replacement females. NALF will be focusing its efforts to accomplish this. I was excited to see the vision of the breed when I reviewed the Strategic Plan that was developed by your board of directors and membership. It is on target to adapt to the changes that are coming, and I admire your organization for having the ability and the courage to look down the road and adjust accordingly.

My experience on the production and feeding side of the industry allowed me to see firsthand how well Limousin-influenced cattle perform in natural feeding programs over their English-based counterparts once they are required to rely solely on genetics and feed cost. With a big percentage of the nation's cow herd being straight bred blacks, we are the perfect complement to enhance the nation's feeder cattle supply with the advantages offered by the Limousin breed. You might be surprised at how well our breed of cattle does in terms of quality grade when they are in a natural program!

Traditional cattle feeding programs will remain the core of the fed cattle industry, yet new marketing alternatives are presenting themselves and will continue to grow over the next five years that will benefit our breed in a big way! Natural cattle feeding is on the increase and will continue to grow because of consumer acceptance and the current marketplace.

With its enhanced performance characteristics directly related to feed efficiency, conversion rates, averaged daily gains, dressing percent and yield grade advantages, the Limousin breed is in a unique position to capitalize on this trend. When performance enhancing products such as implants are omitted and more feeders move into these programs, Limousin-influenced cattle enhance these economically vital cost and production traits to both the feeder and packer.

Export markets will continue to grow. Age and source verification will become more the norm than the exception. Natural programs, Non-Hormone Treated Cattle (NHTC) cattle and a host of other programs that offer premiums to producers are becoming more prominent, yet these programs

require sound performance genetics to capitalize on those premiums in a business that survives on thin margins and volatile markets. This is an opportunity lying in our lap.

To grow the breed, it is imperative that Limousin-influenced cattle sell at the top of the feeder cattle market whether they are headed to conventional or natural cattle feeding outlets. Limousin and Lim-Flex cattle will sell well for our producers, if we capitalize on this pull through demand.

We need to give maximum effort to focusing on and producing a type and class of cattle that works for the cow-calf operation, stocker operator, feedyard, packer and retailer, as that product makes its way to the ultimate customer, the consumer. We must present the industry with a problem-free breed that adds its strengths to a crossbreeding system, but does not derail the system with disproportionate weaknesses. Concentrating on today's Limousin that are deep-ribbed, good-doing cattle capable of topping feeder cattle markets when crossed with a red or black Angus, will create growth for our membership and demand for our cattle.

It is my desire to grow the breed substantially by expanding the Limousin bull market. That means we must gear-up our commercial marketing program. We will have a new, aggressive advertising campaign, as well as plans for promoting crossbreeding and Limousin feed efficiency to the commercial sector.

Since I've joined the family at NALF, it has been my pleasure to learn that you have an extremely talented staff in Denver that has the breed's best interest at heart, and they are extremely dedicated! I encourage you to utilize them, the programs currently offered and those that are about to be implemented. They are a talented group!

Stay in contact with your board of directors and give them your feedback. They have a vision and direction for this breed that is very exciting.

I also believe that any cattle organization that expects to have a viable future must have a strong junior program! I encourage the junior membership of this organization to participate in the programs NALF offers. Become more engaged; exhibit and promote the breed with confidence. There is a bright future for you and great opportunities down the road!

I could not be more excited to be with the Limousin breed right now. The potential is limitless. The enthusiasm of everyone I have met makes this a great time to be on the Limousin team.

For Limousin, this is our time for the breed to step into the picture and gain marketshare. I look forward to meeting and seeing you around the country in the upcoming year! **LW**