

American Lowline Registry  
Board of Directors Meeting  
December 21, 2016  
Special Meeting  
Conference Call

Members Present: Janis Black, Craig Walker, David Shockey, Neil Effertz, Larry Watkins, Rick Dodd, Wade Coffey

Others Present: Jan Effertz, Darwin Engelkes, Kirk Duff, Kent McCune, Dean Pike

President Janis Black called the meeting to order and asked Kirk Duff to explain his thoughts.

Kirk Duff explained he has been thinking about making Lowlines more marketable. The term Aberdeen Plus has worked well for his operation. He has a lot of friends in the Lowline breed and Lowline cattle have worked well for him. He thinks using the "Angus" name would help the marketability of the breed.

To appeal to his commercial customers, he coined the term Aberdeen Plus. He explains to his commercial customers that they are old fashioned Angus and they understand immediately what he means. He would have to explain the term "Lowline" and it isn't as marketable. He has been hesitant to approach the ALR because he didn't want to offend, his intention is to help, not hurt.

He is offering the term "Aberdeen Plus", which he has trademarked, to the ALR. It would apply to animals that are DNA parentage verified to a registered Lowline and a registered Angus parent. The parentage verification on the Angus side might require some grandfather clause if DNA was not available on a registered Angus parent but in the future, DNA verification would be required. Therefore, Aberdeen Plus cattle would be true Angus cattle. He now feels the need to share the name with the ALR.

Craig Walker said Kirk Duff has made Lowline influenced cattle marketable. This is an opportunity for the ALR and he is excited about it.

Kent McCune said he and Kirk Duff discussed this on Monday. They want to give the Lowline breed more momentum. To raise the image and influence of the breed, many people have to get past the name. This is especially important when the NDSU research will be presented to the industry at the Lowline Congress.

Wade Coffey asked how this would affect fullbloods.

Kirk Duff said his approach would be to keep it easy. The papers would read "American Aberdeen Angus" with different categories - Fullbloods would be 100%, Purebreds would be 75% or greater, Aberdeen Plus would be 25% - 74%. Lowline with the other percentage registered Angus or registered Red Angus. Percentage cattle that are crossed with other breeds, would be called Aberdeen Moderators. This is just a suggestion. The categories would eliminate the percentages on the papers.

Neil Effertz asked if he anticipated problems with the American Angus Association or the Red Angus Association.

Kirk Duff said he spoke with the specialist he has used in the past for trademarks and she thought it would be ok. Before this conversation, he purchased related domain names and will give them to the registry – americanaberdeenangus.com, aberdeenanguscattle.com – just to protect the names.

David Shockey said he has a lot of cattle that are Lowlines crossed with commercial Angus that are not papered. Many registered Angus cattle do not have DNA on file. How would that be handled?

Kirk Duff said he has some non-papered Angus cattle too but he can't prove they are pure Angus. We would have to be tough on parentage verification to protect the integrity or wholesomeness of the name.

Neil Effertz asked if there was a gray area with Red Angus crosses. Would the Red Angus parent for an Aberdeen Plus need to be a 1A or 1B?

Kirk Duff said it would need to be a 1A, percentage Red Angus parents would not qualify.

Neil Effertz said he likes keeping the Lowline breed under one umbrella.

Kirk Duff discussed a possible grandfather clause for existing Lowline Moderators out of registered Red Angus or Angus parents which could be in place for about 6 months. It is not hard or expensive to get DNA on file for Angus sires. For the longevity of the breed it is important to be fair and honest, make the rules simple and follow them. Where money is involved, people will try to get around the rules.

Larry Watkins said Kirk Duff's thoughts were well explained.

Rick Dodd said he likes the idea.

Neil Effertz said we have people with Moderator herds in place. We need to keep this fair and equitable with breeders that have developed programs – we should be careful not to step on the toes of someone with a program using other breeds. We need to be very cognizant not to discriminate against some Lowline cattle.

Larry Watkins said the term Aberdeen Moderator will add value to all Lowline cattle. We need to give this a little thought. It may require a change of the bylaws.

Neil Effertz said we need to be careful. We don't want Aberdeen Plus and Lowline breeders to become adversarial to each other. We need to think this through and do it right.

Kirk Duff said he fully understands and agrees with Neil. He does not want to harm anyone intentionally. He believes this will be for the betterment of the majority of the association. It will put a new face to the Lowline name. The Aberdeen name has proven itself very successful with consumers.

Neil Effertz said he agrees if done properly, it's a good name. "Aberdeen" describes the breed. He has never liked the term Lowline. When the breed was introduced, the Australians were against changing the name in the US. From a marketing perspective, it's a much better name.

Kirk Duff said if Red Angus or Angus cattle are imported from Canada or South America, they need to be re-registered in the US.

Kent McCune said there would need to be a set of rules set up to issue US papers for imported cattle.

Kirk Duff and Kent McCune left the meeting.

Janis Black said if the board is interested in doing this, we need to give it some thought and do it right.

Larry Watkins said he likes the idea. Developing the process will be more difficult. The word Lowline holds us back. It is something to look into and think about.

Darwin Engelkes said he likes the idea. It will take lots of legwork before we can make a decision. He likes Neil's comment about breeders who have built a program without Angus, we can't alienate them. They need to be included. It will take a lot of work.

David Shockey said initially thought we would have Aberdeen Plus and Lowline Moderators, all under the Lowline heading. It is doable and he's all for it.

Dean Pike said when you first hear the idea, it's exciting. It needs to be thought through and obstacles need to be considered. This would involve changing the name completely to Aberdeen. In marketing, the word Lowline is a drawback. It will take some time and merits exploring the idea in depth.

Craig Walker said he doesn't want to alienate anyone. It isn't as hard as people are making it seem. He would love to see the Lowline name gone. Those with Moderator programs would still have Moderators. He owns no registered Angus cows but he will be shopping for some. He would like to implement this and present it to the world and industry at the Lowline Congress.

Wade Coffey said he loves the idea. He doesn't want to devalue current cattle and doesn't think it would. We need to be careful. It will be a lot of work and we should be started. If the board could meet 3 – 4 days somewhere, let's do it.

Craig Walker said it doesn't have to be a name change.

Wade Coffey said he absolutely wants to change the name.

Janis Black said Kirk and Kent are discussing changing the name of Lowlines. Would it be feasible to add an Aberdeen Plus program.

Neil Effertz said it would be feasible but confusing. We also need to consider the international component. The research in Dickinson is using Lowline genetics.

Rick Dodd said he agrees people will get confused. There would be lots of operations that would have to change their ranch name. Let's do this right. We need to think about it and move forward. We should meet while we are in Denver. He needs to give it some more thought.

Janis Black said we cannot make a rash decision. She understands the excitement. She spoke with Sherry Doubet who recommended we ask a few industry leaders about their thoughts on the word "Aberdeen" to be sure they perceive it as an acceptable thing. Our next meeting is January 10. Is that too long to think about it? The holidays are coming up. We need to think long and hard before we jump off the boat.

Wade Coffey said we should wait until January 10.

David Shockey said it is good to wait. We need to suggest, not ram things down the breeders' throats. This is huge, we need to ease people into it.

Janis Black said we could not have it ready by Denver.

David Shockey said Lowlines have been called the original Aberdeen Angus for years.

Larry Watkins and Wade Coffey agreed that Moderators with benefit from this and are still good cattle.

Neil Effertz mentioned that Genex is marketing "Aberdeen" semen from Scottish bulls. We need to think about this. He likes the word, he likes the concept, we need to do it right.

Larry Watkins agreed there is a lot to think about.

David Shockey said he can't see a downside.

Janis Black discussed the requirements of changing the bylaws if the ALR. She will put this on the agenda of the January 10 meeting.

It was moved by Rick Dodd, seconded by David Shockey to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Effertz

On December 22, via text message, it was moved by Craig Walker, seconded by Rick Dodd that the ALR develop and control the registrations for the new Aberdeen program and move forward with its planning with the inclusion of Kirk Duff and Kent McCune as program advisors. Motion carried unanimously.