

American-International Charolais Association

The AICA Long Range Committee, together with AICA staff, hosted a series of open-membership Zoom meetings to identify and refine the most pressing needs and strategic opportunities for the growth and advancement of the Charolais breed. Insights gathered through these sessions will guide resource allocation, inform staffing priorities, and shape new initiatives brought before the Board over the next three to five years. Continued input from the membership is strongly encouraged, as ongoing feedback will help ensure that AICA remains responsive, forward-thinking, and aligned with the needs of breeders and the broader industry.

2025 Long Range Planning Summary

Throughout September and early October 2025, the AICA Board and staff conducted a series of focused Zoom sessions to discuss strategic priorities for the Association's future. Each session addressed a critical area of opportunity, with the collective goal of strengthening member value, industry relevance, and organizational sustainability.

Research Initiatives, Technology Use & Non-Traditional Revenue

(September 9)

Discussion focused on expanding AICA's research partnerships, data collection, and technology use to better serve members and create new revenue streams.

Key Points:

- Identify and define target markets for AICA's research and data initiatives.
- Summarize and communicate key profit drivers for members.
- Explore ways to assist members who are feeding customer-owned cattle and integrating this into their business model.
- Pursue collaboration with packers to link feeding and carcass data end-to-end.
- Continue Value Trace updates and explore the potential of female fertility data to enhance commercial heifer valuation.
- Develop non-traditional revenue sources, including:
 - Bull buyer memberships
 - Grant funding opportunities

- Genomic testing services for commercial replacement heifers (including non-Charolais females)
 - Consider incentives such as genomic testing credits redeemable toward future bull purchases.
 - Utilize genomics and precision mating as customer retention and crossbreeding optimization tools.
 - Recognize the increasing role of genomics in the commercial sector; accelerating AICA's industry data compilation will strengthen competitive advantage.
 - Enhance outreach and communication with the commercial cattle community, including auction markets.
 - Create Charolais advocates by strengthening relationships with commercial producers.
-

Expanding the Role of the ACF & Junior Programs

(September 11)

Discussion centered on improving visibility, engagement, and impact of the American Charolais Foundation (ACF) and the AIJCF scholarship program.

Key Points:

- Transition scholarship applications to a digital platform.
 - Create video features highlighting scholarship recipients and families, illustrating the impact of scholarship support.
 - Increase awareness of ACF's mission through informational articles and advertising in the *Charolais Journal* and on AICA digital platforms.
-

AICA Facilities – Building Upgrades & Board Meeting Use

(September 16)

The group reviewed options for optimizing AICA's physical space and ensuring long-term financial prudence.

Key Points:

- Conduct a feasibility study comparing costs of remaining in the current facility versus leasing or purchasing another property.

- Identify facility needs to provide a professional, welcoming, and versatile environment for staff, board meetings, industry tours, and breeder workshops.
- General support for continuing ownership of a dedicated property.
- Favor using in-house space for board meetings to reduce convention and meal costs and improve reliability of audiovisual systems.
- Recap of recent facility improvements, including HVAC system and brick tuckpointing (funded from operations).
- Explore creation of:
 - A historical display area
 - A small studio for podcast and digital media recording
- Establish guidelines: minor maintenance funded through operations; major upgrades pursued via funding or investment.
- Staff will develop a prioritized facilities improvement plan with cost estimates.
- Discussed potential removal or repurposing of the sandpit for expanded use (merchandise or historical display).
- Considered options for outdoor space development or building additions.

Increasing Membership Value, Education & Engagement

(September 18)

The focus was on strengthening member engagement, recruitment, and education to increase the value of Charolais registration and breed influence.

Key Points:

- Explore new member recruitment tools, including a bull buyer membership tier.
- Allow breeder members to cover the first year of bull buyer memberships for customers.
- Recognize the continuum between commercial and registered producers; provide tools and marketing support to encourage registration and brand success.
- Develop a pathway to transition junior members into active adult membership.

- Create educational and advocacy tools (webinars, website resources, affiliate materials, and FAQs).
 - Discuss how increasing membership directly contributes to registered female value—and vice versa.
 - Consider integrating industry perspectives and educational value into board meetings.
 - Explore the concept of one “travel board meeting” annually to engage members in different regions.
 - Expand carcass evaluation education and tools to help breeders align with industry needs.
 - Note logistical concerns regarding meeting length and travel demands.
 - Recirculate a list of successful affiliate engagement tactics.
-

Adding Value to & Positioning a Bull Buyer Membership

(September 23)

Key Points:

- Define structure and benefits of a commercial (bull buyer) membership.
 - Pursue corporate partnerships (e.g., Merck, John Deere) to provide member incentives.
 - Develop informational materials for breeders to share with customers, emphasizing the “Charolais Brand Building” concept.
 - Engage industry stakeholders—order buyers, packers—through a commercial cattle panel discussion.
-

Performance Programs & Genetic Evaluation

(September 25)

Key Points:

- Consider increasing the number of NCE runs, ideally to a monthly cadence to align with breeding seasons.

- Continue registry software modernization.
 - Plan for addition of one new trait in 2026.
 - Expand education on genotype and phenotype integration.
 - Investigate legacy data relevance to current animals.
 - Improve data distribution cadence (every three weeks during spring).
 - Incorporate more regional input on subjective traits such as udders and feet.
 - Address adjustments for cattle outside the U.S.
 - Locate and evaluate historical research data (e.g., Dan Hoge, University of Illinois).
 - Reiterate the ongoing challenge: encouraging breeder participation in data submission.
-

Role of Charolais × Dairy Crosses & Resulting Membership Value

(September 30)

Key Points:

- Identify potential of Charolais-sired dairy crosses for comprehensive, year-round carcass data and accuracy advantages.
 - Explore opportunities for live bull and semen sales.
 - Develop connections between breeders and small dairies; establish reference sires and benchmarks.
 - Consider promotion of “clean-up” bulls and integrated systems for dairy producers.
 - Utilize field staff to initiate outreach and project demonstrations, possibly supported by webinars.
 - Define AICA’s role in advocacy and guidance toward optimal genetics, and breeders’ role in market creation.
 - Quantify the data advantage of consistent dairy maternal bases.
 - Examine gestation length, calving ease, and milk production impact on profitability.
 - Review genetic trends in gestation and ribeye area (REA) consistency.
-

Role of Data & Positioning AICA for the Future

(October 1)

Key Points:

- Recognize that the challenges AICA was originally created to solve have evolved.
- Emphasize the need for increased member data submission.
- Acknowledge that while genomics are powerful, data context and volume remain essential.
- Review opportunities in data presentation and yield analysis.
- Revisit definitions and interpretation of EPDs relative to industry averages.
- Strengthen member understanding of EPDs through proof-of-concept examples.
- Reinforce the value of integrating both phenotype and genotype data in evaluations.
- Reference ongoing collaboration and data resources from the University of Idaho.