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Canadian Angus Association Introduces Leadership Team, Launches Strategic Planning Process & Mentorship Program

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Brandon, MB—Canadian Angus Association CEO Rob Smith unveiled his Leadership Team at the Canadian Angus Association Annual National Convention today. Member Value Team Leader and new CAA staff member Carmen Koning, joins existing staff Kajal Devani, Member Service Team Leader and Tina Zakowsky, Administration Team Leader to form the new Leadership Team.

In conjunction with the leadership team announcement, Koning launched the CAA's 2017–18 strategic planning process and Mentorship Program. CAA will spend the next year consulting with members and industry partners as we develop the next iteration of our strategic plan. This plan will be unveiled at Convention 2018.

CAA Mentorship Program

Koning also launched the new CAA Mentorship Program for new breeder development and support. Through this program, Canadian Angus aims to develop a database of expertise to fill commonly identified gaps of knowledge in the industry. “The new Mentorship Program strives to engage young and new Canadian Angus producers and provide them with a structured avenue for support, mentorship and information in order to increase their success and longevity within the industry,” says CEO Rob Smith. “Carmen will work with Nathan Marin, Director of Business Development: New Generation to identify knowledge, experience and opportunities that have potential to make new and/or young producers successful and sustainable within the industry.”

About the Leadership Team

The Canadian Angus Association will support its staff and provide support to its members and stakeholders through the new Leadership Team. As a result, Smith is realigning the CAA staff teams' reporting relationships, communication flow and organizational structure. “To better support existing staff and their respective function groups, including the provision of greater direct and accessible communication, I am creating our CAA Leadership Team which includes Leaders for *Member Service*, *Member Value* and *Administration*,” says Smith. “The opportunity to ‘reset’ my team after almost six years is proving a positive experience and one in which I see opportunity and net gain in member service enhancement and value creation,” he adds.

Kajal Devani joined CAA in 2009 in the Breed Development department. Raised on a mixed farm in Kenya, she obtained an undergraduate degree in animal genetics from the University of Manitoba, and a Masters of same at the University of Alberta. Devani is currently pursuing her PhD at the University of Calgary while working full-time. She is passionate about genetics and their ability to enhance production for two primary ends: successful farmers and ranchers and a memorable dining experience for the beef consumer. Devani is a passionate foodie and enjoys curling, yoga and camping, especially in the Rocky Mountains.

Carmen Koning is CAA's newest staff member. She is originally from Edmonton and divided her time growing up between the capital city, visits to her maternal relatives' farms/ranches in Saskatchewan and Alberta, and camping in British Columbia. Koning has worked extensively in the non-profit sector and has taken the lead on brand management, business development, strategic planning, and stakeholder engagement. She brings more than 15 years of marketing, communications, event planning, project management and customer service to the Canadian Angus Association.

Tina Zakowsky joined CAA in 2006 in the Communications department. Her role includes writing, editing, media relations and board of directors' support. In addition to her CAA responsibilities and volunteering for the Canadian Beef Industry Conference, Zakowsky is also a 10-year volunteer with the Calgary Stampede International Agriculture and Agri-Food Committee and has volunteered for her local community association for two years.

Canadian Angus is proud to welcome Carmen Koning to the staff team and to recognize Kajal Devani and Tina Zakowsky for their new roles.

The Canadian Angus Association is Canada's largest purebred beef breed organization. The Association represents more than 2,000 members across Canada for the purposes of registering and recording the pedigrees of purebred Angus cattle in the closed HerdBook and promoting the breed across Canada. The member-approved mandate is to maintain breed registry, breed purity and provide services that enhance the growth and position of the Angus breed.

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