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PHOTOS: <http://www.cabpartners.com/news/photos/Rosenberg-Jones.jpg>
<http://www.cabpartners.com/news/photos/Walenciak.jpg>
<http://www.cabpartners.com/news/photos/Steamship-Round.jpg> (see value example below)

Around the round

Highly versatile, the beef round rises above the grinder.

By Jill Seiler

Imagine your job is to sell beef as a menu solution, beyond the classic presentations of prime rib, filet mignon, strips and sirloin. Those are known for tender, flavorful and juicy steaks, but also known for hefty price points. Could your job include exploring new cuts and applications from the underutilized round?

It's not so farfetched, according to presenters from the *Certified Angus Beef*[®] (CAB[®]) brand at its Foodservice Leaders Summit in Napa, Calif., earlier this year.

The 160 beef marketers from CAB partner foodservice distributors and processors who paid to attend the annual educational summit certainly paid attention. After all, they could pay much less for an “end meat” round than any of the middle meats traditionally adorning customer menus. Top sirloin, often listed at the lowest price there, could make way for a new cut procured for \$1 less per pound.

CAB Packing Director Clint Walenciak admitted the round has not instilled much sales excitement in the past, but math and knowledge could change that. He noted several cuts such as the eye, inside round, the heel, knuckle and bottom round represent low-cost opportunities.

The company's slide presentation shared one idea on how to make “knuckle sandwiches” from smoked, slow-cooked and pulled beef from the knuckle.

“Since these items don't have major premiums on them, you can upgrade to CAB and really increase the quality for customers,” Walenciak said, noting a cut with less marbling would not produce the same satisfaction.



In the bigger picture, selling more of each CAB-accepted carcass as the brand adds more value back to the ranch, he said.

As CAB Corporate Chef Peter Rosenberg finished preparing shaved steak sandwiches from the eye of the round for a tasting demonstration, Walenciak kept the crowd connected with the economics, detailed examples showing as little as \$1 beef cost for some \$10 to \$12 menu items.

Less expensive and ready for diverse cookery to make round items interesting, flavorful and tender, he showed pathways to higher profit margins for restaurant customers.

When it was time to sample the beef, the chef waited to see reactions as tasting overcame the bias that it had to be tough.

“Most of the people couldn’t believe that was an eye of round,” he said, “because it was so tender and since it was sliced differently.”

After he presented highlights on such favorites as the Steamship Round, which can feed a crowd of hundreds via a carving station, it was time for teammate Cody Jones to wrap up.

“It’s easy to talk about the middle meats; they’re sexy,” said the CAB executive account manager. “Sometimes we just forget to talk about the round.”

Its versatility and value have been raising the wholesale cut’s profile, however.

“We want to sell from nose to tail and drive as much value as we can from the chuck to the round,” said Jones, who once worked for one of the foodservice companies represented among attendees. “We make that whole animal worth more if we sell all the cuts for the brand.”

As key strategies, Jones outlined several cultural applications, such as Japanese *shabu-shabu*, *sukiyaki* and *yakiniku*; Korean *bulgogi*, Hispanic *carne asada* and German *rouladen*. He also noted some precooked, value-added products on the market and highlighted uses for the tasty, lean cuts in health care foodservice.

Chef Peter summarized, “Our goal was to show the value of the round other than in ground beef, to bring it to life so there are plenty of ideas and techniques, and then it will market itself. The next time these people look at a round, they’ll think past ground beef.”

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Extreme value and the multiplier effect (see photo link above)

Catering math for 250, appetizer portions

Seafood display: \$20.00

Assorted hot and cold appetizers: \$10.00

Salads and sides: \$7.50

Carving station: Steamship Round: \$5.00

Dessert: \$7.50

Total menu price per person **\$50.00**

Here’s the beef: $\$5/\text{person} \times 250 = \$1,250$

Actual cost of item = $\underline{\quad - \$220 \quad}$

Profit on beef \$1,030