



CAB Corner on Quality (graphic file logo for heading available on request)

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Knowledge is power

By Deanna Scrimger, CAB Assistant Director, Public Relations

Growing up on a farm there are many things that are second nature, from understanding animal husbandry to knowing the difference between hay, straw, corn and oats. You understand that each beast has the potential to produce a different carcass – all with different values.

But what about those responsible for selling our product to consumers? Second nature to a chef are food cost percentages, creating new menu items, and converting a recipe from ten servings to a banquet for five hundred. Yield test, by-products, shelf life and food safety standards are axiomatic to the meat manager at the local grocery store.

The expertise seems exclusive, but there is a common thread bringing the industry segments together – the quest for knowledge. Realizing that this quest is limited only by the imagination, Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) has designed several unique, hands-on learning experiences. The rich tradition of fostering information exchange across industry segments has been an important business strategy for nearly 20 years, starting with the first distributor conference in St. Joseph, Mo., in 1984.

Annually, six different seminars reach nearly 700 people in all. Tailored agendas meet specific goals while maintaining the consistent theme, reaching everyone from distributors to chefs, restaurant owners, retail meat managers and even producers.

Agenda highlights range from feedlots and seedstock operation tours to hands-on carcass fabrication sessions presented at top meat-science universities. It is one thing to read about the *Certified Angus Beef*[®] (CAB) specifications, but imagine the potential when a chef has the opportunity to evaluate

a carcass and see first hand the differences in Yield and Quality Grade. “Following market-ready beef through the harvest process, and then evaluating the carcass for the final USDA quality inspection and calculating Yield Grade is a compelling educational experience,” says KFC Chef Johnny Law. “Every chef should see this.”

Knowing the science, dedication and investment behind the product better equips marketers to answer questions they may receive from their customers. As one past attendee says, “It’s very helpful to understand where, why and how the animal starts.” Or another: “Hearing from a producer about the rarity of CAB (qualifying) cattle set a lasting impression.”

The carcass fabrication session ranks as one of the most valuable at the *Roundup Seminar* designed for foodservice sales representatives and retail meat managers. Fabricating a side of beef to saleable box beef cuts helps create a better understanding of each cut and its respective properties.

The recent *Stampede Seminar* held exclusively for chefs and restaurant operators included a session presented by CAB Corporate Chef Dianna Stoffer and Houston Country Club Chef Fritz Gitschner on “Making the Extraordinary from the Ordinary.” The session explored how value cuts like the brisket, clod heart and short ribs produce cost-effective, profitable ideas that can become a restaurant’s signature entrée. Helping chefs understand how to use these cuts adds value to the entire carcass and helps drive premiums to producers.

Chipping away at the educational process just 700 people at a time may seem like a frugal cause. However, the unique experience moves a customer from simply a product purchaser to a lifetime committed partner and ambassador for the brand. To a national brand, loyal customers are worth more than the sum of their individual purchases. Gateway estimates a customer’s lifetime value at \$45,000, while GM estimates \$276,000 for their brands and Coca-Cola \$6,000. The return is worth the investment.

The breadth of the educational efforts is not limited to seminars. The CAB message is delivered in formats from a computer-based training designed for foodservice distributors, to a *Science Behind the Sizzle* presentation that allows chefs to earn valued Continuing Education Credits and in-store presentations for meat department personnel.

Opportunities are not limited to distributors, chefs and retailers. The CAB *Building Blocks for Success Seminar* held three times a year at the CAB office in Wooster, Ohio, is a unique experience for producers to learn how the brand operates. The *Annual Conference* each fall takes the CAB seedstock and commercial award winners from the pastures to a meeting with elite brand marketers.

“CAB is 25 years old this year and it’s made a tremendous market for Angus cattle and the quality of product they put out,” says Gary Parker, Shamrock Angus, Laramie, Wyo., the 2003 seedstock Commitment to Excellence Award winner. “Visiting with retail people and restaurateurs in Cleveland, they are all so high on our product that it just makes you feel good to come back home and raise good quality Angus cattle.”

In a consumer-driven industry with other proteins and even other Angus brands grasping for market share, there is no doubt: ***Knowledge is Power***. CAB equips our end product marketers with the power to understand the product, how to effectively merchandise it and how to maximize profits for all industry segments. Including the ranch where it all began.

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