



CAB Corner on Quality
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Adding value through Value-Added

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“VAP,” “HMR,” “prepared foods,” “convenient meal solutions,” “quick and easy,” “grab and go.”

These are the new meat industry buzzwords, and what today’s consumers are demanding. According to Jack Dunn, president of IBP (now Tyson)’s consumer branded products group they are here to stay. “People are looking for solutions, and they will trade money for convenience. A growing number of consumers are ‘trading up’ to more expensive, value-added products (VAP) that take steps out of the meat preparation process”

The beef industry has answered with a wide range of products from fully cooked, refrigerated and frozen beef entrees to marinated, ready-to-cook beef strips for today’s time-harried consumer.

Research conducted by Wirthlin Worldwide for the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) in spring 2001 showed all but 34% of in-home meals involved a convenient meal solution, and 43% of consumers decide what’s for dinner just hours before the meal.

It is not only the sandwich generation that buys these products. According to Stephen Cunliffe, president, Prepared Foods Division Nestle USA, “Social dynamics are in our favor. On one end of the continuum are new households where the consumers have little or no culinary skills. On the other end are aging baby boomers and empty nesters who do not want to cook. We need to measure that market and innovate with convenient high quality products.”

Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) recognized this impending growth category and boarded the VAP wagon just three years ago. CAB would enter the value-added arena with only the highest quality products that would be a premier representation of the brand line. Today the line includes 30 products (see list), made by 22 processors throughout the United States. Traditional favorites like slow-roasted pot roast and innovations like

the Steak Filet™ (also known as the beef industry's answer to the chicken breast,) can be found under the *Certified Angus Beef*® brand.

New additions to the line this year include a gourmet sausage produced by Aidelle's Sausage Co., San Leandro, Calif. Fajita, Mediterranean, and Asian teriyaki sausages satisfy gourmet palettes with a regional flair. Consumers who struggle to get that holiday roast just right can put their fears to rest with a precooked, pre-seasoned, prime rib roast produced by Hudson Foods, Columbus, Ohio.

All of these products mean greater carcass utilization through increased demand for typically undervalued items, increasing the demand for Angus type cattle that qualify for the CAB brand.

The beef industry has embraced and even pioneered VAP development. But the arena has typically been an outlet for lesser quality cuts that can be enhanced through technological innovation. CAB takes a novel approach: Start with a high-quality product and add value through minimal processing to create a superior end product that leaves consumers raving. Surprisingly to many outside the CAB brand, consumers will pay more for the guarantee of a consistently delicious product.

CAB Means Top Quality

The Salt Lake Organizing Committee for the Winter Olympics saw the value in CAB value added products when they asked the company to be the official branded beef supplier to the 2002 Winter Olympic and Para Olympic Games. The feature item? A quarter-pound (all CAB) frankfurter, produced by Fred Usinger Co. Additional items include barbecue beef, produced by W & G Marketing, Quick-and-Easy pot roast produced by RMH, and a variety of deli items from Levonian Brothers to be served at all venues, the Olympic Village and sponsored hospitality areas. Spectators' who want to warm up on the cold, blustery, Salt Lake winter days will enjoy a new Wild West Chili, produced by Advanced Foods Co. from CAB ground beef and top sirloin.

The NCBA Best New Beef Products selection committee also recognized the value of CAB in value-added products. In 2000, the RMH Foods CAB "Top Sirloin in Bourbon Sauce" won top honors as the best new retail beef product and the best new beef product overall. The CAB BUBBA burger™ was recognized as the best new beef product marketed by a small company. Eaves Foods, Elberton, Ga., received recognition as the processor of this innovative frozen patty. Several other products were named as finalists emphasizing the quality of the line overall.

Where will CAB value-added go from here? Up. New product development and partnerships with compatible brands are on the radar for the near future. Sales of CAB heat-and-serve entrees increased 71% in the last year and are strongly positioned for continued growth. Will a downturn in the economy hinder growth in the category? According to Michael Sansolo of the Food Marketing Institution, as quoted in *Refrigerated and Frozen Food*, "People still tell us they are looking for convenience; consumers still are attracted to value-added products and meal solutions," he says.

Value-added items are the perfect fit for any event around your dining room table. Farm and ranch folks are the best cooks, usually capable of turning out the perfect roast the old-fashioned way. But just think about all the fence posts you could be setting instead of slaving away in the kitchen. OK, if you really do like to cook, at least give these new products a try so you can provide a great testimonial.

To find out where to purchase CAB value-added items near you contact the toll-free Flavor-Finder™ line at 1-877-2EAT-CAB, or visit us on the Web at 2eatcab.com.

Certified Angus Beef® brand value-added products currently available include:

Andouille Sausage	Meatloaf
Barbeque Beef	Pastrami
Beef Sticks	Philly Meat (Flat & Breakaway)
Bologna	Polish Sausage
Cooked Ground Beef Patties	Pot Roast
Cooked Salami	Prime Rib (Slice & Roast)
Corned Beef (Cooked & Fresh)	Roast Beef
Country Fried Steaks	Shredded Beef
Flavored Gourmet Sausages	Smokey Beef Brisket
Frankfurters	Southwest Brisket
Frozen Ground Beef Patties	Steak Filets™ of Beef
(Consumer Packaged)	Summer Sausage
Knockwurst	Top Sirloin Steak
	Tri-tip

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