



CAB Corner on Quality
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What VAP should stand for

By George Falb, CAB Value-Added Products Manager

There's the NCBA, CAB, USDA, VAP – oh yeah, that last one stands for value-added products – so many words, acronyms and meanings. Cell-phone texting has created another whole world of new letter arrangements. You may know what a lot of the abbreviations stand for, but with VAP, here's the rest of the story.

Those three letters are better known within the beef industry, but even here it helps to start with a full definition. Valued-added products or services are simply those that a seller has enhanced before offering to customers.

In a sense, your calves are VAP if they are also VAC 45, to use another acronym. As you probably know, that comes from the concept of a vaccinated or literally Value-Added Calf weaned 45 days or more. You add more value to build your reputation and brand, and to command a higher price, of course.

Beef industry leaders, visionaries and opportunists got together many years ago and decided to further process some of the underutilized cuts of beef. That's the concept that gave us deli meats, cooked prime rib, frankfurters, sausage and the phrase "value-added products."

Over the years, a lot of the VAP processes have changed very little. In fact, many consumers gravitate toward that "old-fashioned" style and flavor.

What did start changing, however, was the type and amount of ingredients added. Some processors have seen the opportunity to increase profits by blending in cereal grains, textured proteins, water, binders or other additives into their products. More additives ... less beef!

There are some cases where so little beef remains in the product that flavoring has to be added so it tastes like beef. You can see that unlike the VAC 45 calf or the purebred Angus bull with your guarantee and Association registration, some VAP concepts are one sided, and the seller benefits more than the buyer.

Because of added ingredients cheaper than beef, some “enhanced” products can withstand a lower price. On the other hand, as with the generic, black-hided bull, “you get what you pay for.”

Cheap isn’t about low cost. When a “value” product is offered that has lower quality and “value,” that word is watered down, if you will pardon the pun. Maybe within VAP, the word CHEAP can mean Creation of Highly Excessive Adulterated Products.

Of course, there’s always a place in the market for the truly cheap product, but how does that help the Angus producer? Fortunately, there’s an ever-growing demand for premium value-added products. The consumer is looking for that clean, honest beef flavor that cheap products just can’t provide. Cutting tests prove that time and time again. Hey, maybe within VAP, the premium category should be called “QAP” or Quality-Added Products, or we should start using the PVAP acronym to reflect the premium value.

As Americans, we like convenience and diversity when it comes to making our next meal. PVAP can fit the bill. From the retail deli to the high-end restaurant, you can buy a *Certified Angus Beef*[®] (CAB[®]) brand andouille sausage in a simple bun, or an appetizer of Andouille a la Jeanine or the classic Andouille Jambalaya. How about a classic CAB homemade but pre-cooked pot roast, pot roast strudel or leftover in pot roast omelets the next morning?

There are literally thousands of possibilities, as these are just a few of the ways your CAB partners increase value and add universal satisfaction to the meaning of “value-added products.” And those ever-expanding possibilities are just a few thousand ways the brand helps you win, as a consumer and as an Angus beef producer.

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