



CAB Corner on Quality
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April 2010

No ordinary days out there

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Imagine a typical day on the ranch, or as a regional executive account manager (EAM) for the *Certified Angus Beef*[®] (CAB[®]) brand. You might try that first part, but what's typical? Like "average" weather, it's hard to pin down while it's happening.

If you have a big ranch with diverse enterprises, you need a team to plan, execute and proactively manage whatever comes up each day. With CAB licensees spread across much of the world, we make use of a regional manager concept, each with a unique territory and responsibilities. Domestically, we have nine regions.

Mine is the largest in terms of land, but not people. It covers a million square miles from the Northern Plains to Oregon, Hawaii and Alaska, reaching across five time zones from our company base in Wooster, Ohio.

Licensees spread far and wide appreciate a personal connection to the brand they share as partners with members of the American Angus Association. I get to work with foodservice distributors, restaurant owners and chefs, hotel and healthcare operators, retail meat directors and meat department personnel. My job is to be their primary CAB contact and provide that connection.

However, I also get to work with packers, fabricators, steak-cutting operations, ground beef processors, value-added-product processors, marketing and public relation teams. The list goes on, so you can see that an EAM must be a great generalist, familiar with every aspect of how CAB works. I couldn't know a little about everything if not for the strong CAB team of 90 to 100 others, including many specialists.

The team approach includes marketing, customer service, brand assurance, public relations, packing, value-added products, the culinary team and supply development. Our determination to strengthen the connection with licensed customers has become increasingly focused since the 1990s.

One watch word at CAB and on many Angus seedstock operations is "relevance." To be relevant to your customers, your actions and those of your representatives also must be relevant. We need to better understand our customers' businesses, their needs, goals and challenges to make them

succeed with this brand. It is not enough to simply be the best brand of beef in the world. We need to make it matter to our customers and their customers, so it will matter more to Angus producers and add more value to what you do on the ranch.

But about that typical day; it might include:

- Strategic Planning – working with executive teams at CAB licensed accounts to develop plans for products, placement and promotion.
- Merchandising – new cuts, ideas, merchandising techniques, recipes, trends and cutting tests.
- Training – conducting sessions on beef production, meat science, competing brands, trends in the industry (local? sustainable? grass-fed? grain-fed?), sales strategy and product fabrication.
- Market conditions – understanding and answering questions about the live cattle market, meat trends and influences to these markets such as corn yields and weather.
- Travel – much of a typical week (30% to 70%) involves travel of some kind, by car or airplane, to be there for our accounts.
- Communication – the KEY to success with customers as well as with the staff in Ohio and on the road. The team approach is crucial in building connections with customers.
- Random – on Tuesday, I was in a test kitchen of a major national restaurant chain, working with their culinary team to prepare a sampling for the founder and CEO. A few days before, I helped an Alaskan sales rep on the logistics of supplying a village with only air and dog-sled access. Earlier in the month, I had a five-hour meeting with management of a major resort in central Oregon discussing product opportunities, branding, marketing and training of their staff. Meanwhile, our team often plans ranch-based training events where we can take a group of our customers to see “hands on” what Angus producers do in their daily job of providing the world’s best beef. Again, no day or week is typical.

The EAM title is a general term. Some days I am the motivator, cheerleader, confidant, consultant, trainer, communicator, reprimander or strategizer. I’m riding herd for the brand while building ever stronger relationships based on mutual trust.

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