



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

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## **Wooster is not Rome**

*By Mark Polzer, CAB Vice-President for Business Development*

When 13,500 licensees worldwide sell 50 million pounds of *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> (CAB<sup>®</sup>) brand products each month, some people call it a branded beef empire. In its global reach and scope, the term could fit.

However, Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) does not function like an empire. It is safe from the follies that led to the fall of so many former greats, from Alexandria to Rome. The producer-owned non-profit subsidiary of the American Angus Association thrives only because it serves. Its troops in the sales divisions are out to counsel more than conquer, and direction is spreading out, away from the capital.

CAB is based in Wooster, Ohio, because the idea first caught fire and grew in Ohio. After the first 10 years, building the link to producers brought a need to diversify the base to include, at that time, Colorado and Montana offices. Ten years later, the current CAB Supply Development satellite office opened in Manhattan, Kan. However, the core business was still concentrated in Wooster.

It's a great place to do business, but there's nothing magical about the location. No single place is ideal for central administration of thousands of licensees around the world.

CAB staff numbers grew to nearly 100 as this decade opened, but almost every visit to accounts involved air travel. We would be lucky to see our major foodservice accounts more than once a year. Retail was spread thinner so that many accounts went more than a year without a visit. For international accounts, the wait was longer still.

This did not go on for long. Noting the success of the Regional Manager (RM) concept within the Association, CAB set up pilot programs with a few off-site regional account managers who had served in the Wooster office. The concept was formalized in 2003 and the network of offsite executive account managers (EAM) grew to 12, placed strategically where they can best serve. The International Division was restructured with offsite offices, including one in Japan.

Now, with less staff, we visit key foodservice accounts three to six times a year and maintain weekly phone contact. On the retail side, we not only visit most corporate accounts monthly—we are in-store with key individuals to put in place new meat-cutting strategies and case alignments. We monitor customer feedback and interact at store level with the meat managers.

Team Angus has worked well in that Association RM's have helped set up visits to Angus ranches, and our EAM's have shared the consumer side of the beef business with Angus producers.

Among the unique services CAB brings to the product side, perhaps none rival the ranch and packinghouse visits. Busloads of retail or foodservice managers gain firsthand knowledge of where CAB product comes from.

Look for further refinement of this broader-based service approach from CAB, as we name Eastern and Western sales directors this summer. Our experts in the field can provide better, more relevant oversight to grow your branded beef empire. They will help ensure that the CAB brand will stand the test of time and keep adding more dollars to the value of your Angus cattle.

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