

June 22, 2018

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## California rancher chairs CAB Board

By Sarah Moyer

When California rancher and Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) Board chairman David Dal Porto steps into a meeting room, he carries experience, a broad perspective on beef and pride in his own Angus herd.

With his first heifer dating back to a 4-H project at age 9 and his lifelong, diverse involvement with cattle groups, the rancher's engagement prevails as personal tradition.

Time spent on regional, state and national boards has been well worth it.

"It makes me realize is how important it is to serve the industry that we make our living with, that we raise our family with, and that we're fully engaged with," he says.

Even CAB meetings serve as familiar territory, because Dal Porto was on the Board for three years prior to this leadership term.

"David is a dedicated Angus breeder who truly appreciates how the brand fits into the larger beef supply and merchandizing chain," CAB President John Stika says. "That perspective has served the brand and fellow Angus breeders well."

The rancher's personality benefits group discussions, too.

"David contributes a great sense of 'practical optimism' to each and every conversation," Stika says. "While not one to ever discount or dismiss the real challenges that stand in front of the brand's progress and growth, he has never chosen to merely dwell on those issues. Instead, the vision and input he brings to the Board keeps dialogue centered on solutions, and on exploring new opportunities for the brand to further fulfill its mission."



Dal Porto shares his own perspective on the role.

“Being a member of the Board, or specifically Board chairman, I just kind of guide the thoughts of the members and meld those with the management at CAB so that everybody’s always pulling in the same direction,” he says.

The chairman chats on his cellphone, moving from spot to spot on his ranch in rolling hill country to discuss what may lie ahead for the brand. Goals parallel those of his family’s ranch, Dal Porto Livestock.

“When we are working with our livestock and our animals here at the ranch, we are always trying to improve,” he says. “Nothing is ever perfect, so we have always had to keep moving forward.”

Sales quickly come to mind when assessing the year and prospects ahead; 2018 projections show positive outcomes for the brand.

“I think we’re going to have another record year as far as growth in sales,” the chairman says confidently.

More specifically, research in international markets continue.

“Exports have shown tremendous growth the first half of this year, and we’d like to continue to see that to grow based on what’s going to happen with some of the trade policies,” he says. “But we’d certainly like to see export growth in trading countries that we deal with.”

“There’s huge growth potential internationally. There truly is,” he continues. “The sky’s the limit I think, especially for a high-quality product like *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> as we separate ourselves from commodity programs.”

Stika supports Dal Porto’s leadership on those subjects.

“David might never describe himself as an expert in beef retailing, distribution or export,” he says. “Yet, I have found him to be a proven student of those things that influence his business as an Angus breeder and his effectiveness as a Board member.

“Thus,” Stika continues, “it is no surprise that during his time on the CAB Board, David has built a solid, applied understanding of how the brand must be relevant to consumers and those partners we depend on to merchandise our product. Ultimately the goal is to grow the benefit Angus breeders receive from the CAB brand’s presence and promotion in the global marketplace.”

Past the packer, Dal Porto says partnerships reinforce work done to promote the brand to consumers.

“We’d like to see all of our packer and wholesaler and retail partners continue to feature the brand where it makes economic sense for them, and continue to provide the consumer with a wholesome, good-tasting product,” Dal Porto says.

His third main topic, technology advancements, links new innovation with how the beef community changes breeding strategies when data is available.

“Genomics has just moved extremely rapid in the last two or three or four years, and it’s going to continue to move fast as we move forward,” he says. “That and all the good producers out in the country that are raising good genetics have seen our CAB brand acceptance rates go from 17% not too long ago to where 32-33% is the norm every month. And that’s a huge jump.

“The main thing is to keep the brand growing—that we rely on staff to do, and they’re doing a great job,” he says.

When the rancher steps back from the chair, he’ll remain a family man who enjoys working with the cattle at home.

“Here on our operation, Jeanene and I and our family members and our employee, we really enjoy what we do,” he says. “And of course it’s a business. It’s a business we want to make some money at and feed our family, but we really enjoy just caring for the animals.”

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