



Brand News

► News and highlights from Certified Angus Beef LLC,* compiled by Laura Conaway, Certified Angus Beef LLC

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CAB in the City of Angels

The second-largest foodservice market in the United States now has more access to the Certified Angus Beef® (CAB®) brand by way of Sysco Los Angeles (Sysco-LA).

To be sure, Newport Meat Co., 30-year CAB partner in that market already targets upscale and fine dining there and in other western venues from Utah and Nevada to Hawaii.

"Licensing Sysco LA provides an opportunity for more potential CAB customers in a very important market," Mark Polzer says. The brand's vice president of business development praised the March 14 launch, saying the new distributor is critical to supplying the brand to medium-tier restaurants, as well as healthcare and Hispanic markets.



Chefs on the air

The CAB mission of adding value to Angus cattle is always Job 1, but that often comes from building consumer brand recognition.

Susan Littlefield, farm director at KZEN-FM, near Columbus, Neb., came to the 2015 National Cattlemen's Beef Association Trade Show in San Antonio, Texas, on something of a mission, too. She wanted to find an innovative way to educate listeners on how to create delicious meals at home using beef.

"I was looking for something unique and new to put on the air," Littlefield says. "I wanted something that tied into a consumer perspective, but still remained relevant to the producer."

Visiting with CAB staff at the trade show about her interview with CAB Chef Ashley Pado sparked an idea: Why not feature brand chefs for an on-air series about how listeners can use CAB in their very own kitchens?

That is what has been happening for more than a year now, first with Chef Ashley and, more recently, with Chef Tony Biggs. The

program airs on a segment called "Inside Agriculture," aimed mainly toward producers, but offering something more.

"I like to add a twist to the program so it tailors to the consumer," explains Littlefield. "Whether I am talking about a producer using different genetics in their herd, or how to prepare a meal during calving season, I like to make it relatable to the consumer."

She's had positive feedback from producers and consumers.

"To hear positive comments from producers means more than anything to me," Littlefield says. "They usually don't say anything unless they are not happy with something, so to have them really talking positive about something is pretty cool."

Even if the consumer is not associated with the beef industry, they find Chef Tony's segments beneficial to their everyday meal routines.

"Sometimes the audience may not relate to the busyness of calving season, but they might be trying to make it to that basketball or wrestling practice," she says. "They like to know they have an opportunity to put

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together a good family meal without a lot of effort.”

Corah in Florida

Larry Corah, longtime Extension beef specialist in Kansas and recently retired CAB vice president, spoke to 175 cattlemen at the annual Northwest (Marianna) Florida Beef Conference in February. Producers from northern Florida and surrounding states came to learn.

Corah acknowledged the volatility of the current market and offered encouragement to keep raising cattle that can achieve quality payouts. Cattle health, weight and consumer demand drive profits, he said.

“The consumer is the one determining the value of your cull cows and the price you get for your calves,” Corah said. “We have to produce a product that the consuming public desires and wants, but the great news is they’ll pay you for it.”

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Larry Corah

Meanwhile at the ECC

Since its establishment in February 2012, the CAB Education & Culinary Center (ECC) has served as a unique gathering place. Partners in and outside of the beef industry are gaining insight into the brand and the quality beef that defines it.

From cattlemen to media guests and scientists to chefs, more than 225 groups have visited the Wooster, Ohio, venue from all parts of the world. This ECC column within Brand News will help keep producers current on recent events there.

- ▶ Blue Ribbon Meats customer event, March 14
- ▶ Larkin’s Group, March 14-16
- ▶ MBA 10.3, March 21-25
- ▶ Sysco Central Florida, March 29-30
- ▶ AWG and VIP Customer’s Event, March 30-31

Digital extras

Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) and the American Angus Association provide these video segments. Readers of our digital edition can click on the photo to launch the respective YouTube video. The url (www ...) for each video is also provided for our print edition readers.



John Butler, CEO of the Beef Marketing Group, and Cameron Brutt, head of corporate affairs for JBS-USA, talk about sustainability and what the beef community needs to do to satisfy the consumer. Here’s the clip: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4uTaQkhg7s.



Paul Dykstra, of Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB), discusses 2015 grading trends and their implications for cattle producers in 2016. Here’s the clip: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqNGBtxna6w.



Cliff Lamb, assistant director and professor, University of Florida North Florida Research and Education Center, discusses the importance of a healthy body condition score and the effect it has on the success of a future calf crop. Here’s the clip: www.youtube.com/watch?v=pGL67frjEbs.



Kevin Good, senior market analyst for CattleFax, discusses the year behind and the year ahead. His team says the cattle market “price shock” is over. Here’s the clip: www.youtube.com/watch?v=DclHj8JEDnw.

Approximately 70% of all cattle fed today are sold on a grid-based system that identifies individual animals and offers premiums or discounts for value markers like quality, he noted.

Bull sales + education

Spring means more opportunity for Paul Dykstra, beef cattle specialist for the brand, to hit the trail and interact with producers, seeing cattle and visiting with their owners and caretakers.

March found Dykstra at Rollin' Rock Angus and Riverbend Ranch, Hermiston, Ore., and Idaho Falls, Idaho, respectively, to speak at bull sales about the value of genomic selection. In conjunction with Zoetis and the priority given to available DNA-focused tools, Dykstra addressed nearly 300 cattlemen at the two events.

Emphasizing the upward trend in beef quality grades and CAB acceptance rates, he said there's no reason for cattlemen to turn back from that course, but to keep including above-average marbling in selection decisions.

"What we are seeing across the entire cattle population is that we have raised the bar," Dykstra said. "As producers, we need to surpass that in order to stay at a premium level."

He congratulated producers and advised them to use the genetic tools when selecting bulls, looking at the numbers that are driving feeder cattle and finished cattle values.

"That's the key to having a good educational session," Dykstra said, "where folks can travel in, have supper, socialize and listen to material prior to sale day."



► Paul Dykstra, beef cattle specialist for CAB, visited Rollin' Rock Angus and Riverbend Ranch, Hermiston, Ore., and Idaho Falls, Idaho, respectively, to speak at bull sales about the value of genomic selection.

Story behind the numbers: 120 million

In light of CAB's 2015 fiscal year, totaling 896 million pounds (lb.) sold, the number 120 million could get overshadowed. Not a chance here.

Considering what it takes to drive the brand domestically, there are even more challenges when it comes to international sales. CAB partners in 52 countries tied the brand's 2014 record. That good news means 13.5% of CAB brand sales took place outside of the United States last year. It's great news, considering all the challenges overcome.

"From a purchasing power standpoint, many of our key markets were under tremendous pressure because of the decreasing value of their currency against the U.S. dollar," says Geof Bednar, CAB international director. "That affected our opportunities."

Canada, Mexico and Japan remained at the top, but U.S. beef exports of whole-muscle cuts through September last year were down 13%. However, Bednar says other key markets, such as the Middle East and South Korea, grew in sales by 29.6% and 10.6%, respectively. That helped CAB sales run counter to trends in traditionally top trading countries.

"Since opening our Japanese office, we've been able to significantly increase our footprint — not only from a brand positioning standpoint in that market, but also from an everyday communication level with the most key importers, distributors and restaurant chains in Japan," Bednar says.

Check back next month for another story behind the numbers.

