

by Lauren Mosher, Liscomb, Iowa
2017 National Junior Angus Show
Intermediate B Public
Speaking winner



From pasture to plate

Picture this: It's a beautiful summer evening and you are sitting on your patio enjoying the sunshine. The birds are chirping, a soft wind is blowing through the trees, and your steaks are sizzling on the grill. You take them off — take the first bite ... yum! Have you ever wondered how that juicy steak got to your plate?

Hi, I'm a fifth-generation beef producer. We own a seedstock, cow-calf and feedlot operation. Watching calves grow from being in the pasture until they land on a consumer's plate is truly an inspiring event.

Today I want to show you three C's of the industry — the beef community, how we care and how we're capable. We are extremely proud of our role in feeding people. This is evident in the way we have invested in beef safety improvements, responded to consumers' preferences and focused on creating the best beef-eating experiences.

Our mission is to provide the safest, highest-quality, most consumer-friendly beef in an environmentally and economically sustainable manner.

So what do we mean by the beef community?

Community

Family farmers still make up the foundation of the beef community. Today, there are approximately 1 million U.S. cattle farmers and ranchers making daily decisions on how to raise beef.

Ninety-seven percent of beef farms are family-owned and -operated. Fifty-four percent of these have been in the same family for three generations or more, and 64% of cattle farmers say they hope to continue the tradition — passing

down the family farm. Keeping farms and ranches within the family keeps American family values alive and well.

However, these values are not just held by producers.

The beef community includes the people who work at every step in the journey of bringing beef from pasture to plate. The bankers give us financial support, veterinarians take care of sick animals, nutritionists design the cattle diets, truckers take our cattle from place to place, and restaurant and grocery store owners make sure the product lands safely on consumer plates.

While the beef community is broad and diverse, many members grew up sharing the same hopes, dreams and concerns about the future of our planet and our ability to feed a growing world population. And the one thing we all have in common is we all eat and want the food we serve our families to be safe, wholesome and nutritious.

We — those who help bring beef to consumers — are the beef community, and consumers are our No. 1 priority!

Being a part of the beef community means doing our fair share of advocating. One question consumers have is, "Where does beef come from?" We help answer this question by explaining the beef life cycle — the journey, pasture to plate.

The beef life cycle begins on cow-

calf farms where cows are bred and give birth to calves each year.

Calves are weaned from their mother's milk at about 8 months of age, and weigh approximately 500 pounds.

Farmers called stockers and backgrounders purchase many calves at livestock auction markets. Some of the calves, including about one in three female calves, are kept to be breeding animals.

Next, the majority of cattle in the United States are sold or moved to feedyards where they receive a carefully balanced, nutritious diet and individual attention for an average of 150 days prior to slaughter. Feedyards look different than cow-calf operations; they no longer graze, but eat protein. They are typically separated into herds of 100 animals, and live in pens that have plenty of room to move around, groom themselves and socialize with other cattle.

In our feedlot program, a nutritionist designs our diets. We include the following ingredients: corn, silage, distillers' [grains] and hay. All of the ingredients are put into what is called a TMR, a total mixed ration. Just like one would add ingredients when baking a cake, we add ingredients to make their rations every day.

Beef cattle are harvested in processing facilities or packing plants where skilled workers break down

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carcasses into popular beef cuts. Some of these processing facilities that local producers utilize include Iowa Premium Beef, Tyson Meats, Cargill, JBS, Nebraska Beef, National Beef and Greater Omaha.

Iowa Premium Beef is located in Tama, Iowa, and is where we sell our market animals. The cattle must be black-hided and raised on a family farm. Since we send the majority of our cattle to Iowa Premium, they

bring potential buyers out to our farm to show how they are raised and cared for so they are ensured a quality product.

When beef leaves the packing plant, it is in the form of large sections — either primals, like the chuck, round rib and loin; or subprimals, which are smaller cuts of meat like a tenderloin steak, T-bone steak, sirloin steak and ground beef. These are sent to restaurants and

grocery stores worldwide.

Approximately 90% of the beef raised in the United States is consumed in the United States. The remaining 10% of beef is exported.

To become a better advocate for the industry, I recently completed an online course called “Masters of Beef Advocacy” through the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association. Two of the points they stress to us in

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Virginia	
 <p>Daltons of the Sycamore Douglas Dalton Jr., Owner Dennis Eastin, Manager 1473 Daltons Farm Lane Gretna, VA 24557 (434) 656-3459 Dennis cell (434) 941-8757</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SPRING GROVE RANCH</p> <p>Nathan Clarkson Owner (434) 660-4274; springgroveranch@gmail.com</p> <p>Kevin Fleenor General Manager (703) 283-3151; kfle500415@aol.com</p> <div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"> 4414 Spring Grove Rd. Appomattox VA 24522 </div>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>McConnell Angus Farm</i></p>  <p>Robert A. McConnell, Owner P.O. Box 129 Somerset, VA 22972 Barn (540) 672-1535 Cell (703) 509-0056</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Straightstone Angus, LLC</p>  <p>4394 Straightstone Road Long Island, VA 24569 Robert “Doc” Durr, owner</p> <p style="text-align: center;">434-335-4169 • 434-222-1880 (cell) dursur@aol.com</p>
West Virginia	
 <p>Registered Angus since 2009 Featuring Herd Bull <i>84% Density</i> 1307 Hebron Road St. Marys, WV 26170 John McKnight 304-319-1967</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ROCKING P FARM</p> <p>6681 US Hwy. 33 E 4 miles east of I-79 Homer, WV 26372-9734 Don & Mida Peterson (304) 269-3677 E-mail: rockingp@shontel.net Annual Production Sale 1st Friday night in November At Jackson’s Mill, Weston, WV</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">The Brand of Quality</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sires in use: 16772165 17301923 16296089 17852989</p>

the five-section program were that cattlemen and women care about the cattle, and we're capable.

Care and capable

We care.

We care about the same issues every consumer does: the safety of our food, making sure animals receive proper care, preserving the environment for future generations and living healthy lives. We are working hard every day to meet our own, as well as consumer, expectations. Members of the beef community at every stage of the production process take their responsibilities seriously to provide safe and wholesome food for America's dinner plates.

We're capable.

We advocate for the industry in the most positive of manners. In a conversation about beef, it is

important to first listen to questions and concerns. We do not have all the answers. The most important thing is that we acknowledge the concerns and share our commitment to continuously improve to meet the expectations.






As the saying goes, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." (Teddy Roosevelt)

Today, the U.S. beef community is a leader in the global beef marketplace. Thanks to hard work, effective use of natural resources and science-based improvements in breeding, animal nutrition and growth-enhancement technologies, U.S. cattle farmers and ranchers raise 20% of the world's beef with 7% of the world's cattle to help sustainably feed a growing world population.

Family farmers and ranchers still make up the foundation of the beef community. Ninety-seven percent

of beef cattle farms and ranches are family-owned and -operated. The people who work in the steps along beef's journey from pasture to plate often grew up on family farms and ranches. We all share the same hopes, dreams and concerns about the future of our planet and our ability to feed a growing world population. We care about our animals, and we're capable of feeding the world. As you finish enjoying your juicy steak, you can be assured that farmers care about the product that ends up on your plate. **AJ**

Editor's Note: Lauren Mosher won the Intermediate B Division in Prepared Public Speaking at the 2017 National Junior Angus Show in Des Moines, Iowa, with this presentation.

South Carolina	
<p><i>Production Sale, Second Saturday in February</i></p>  <p>W.R. "Billy" McLeod 1320 Old Manning Rd • Sumter, SC 29150 (803) 481-2011 williammcLeod@ftc-i.net • www.blackcrestfarm.com</p>	 <p>TUMBLE T BAR T <i>Dedicated to the future</i></p> <p>Ted Bartee 1717 St. Paul Church Rd • Clover, SC 29710 (803) 222-7533 • Fax (803) 222-9068 email: tumblet8@bellsouth.net</p>
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