

# CAB House Party

*For the staff, it was a big family reunion, getting to show extended kinfolk from across the United States the Certified Angus Beef® (CAB®) brand's Wooster, Ohio, home. For Angus breeders, it was a bit like drawing back a curtain to see what happens behind the logo.*

*by Miranda Reiman, Certified Angus Beef LLC*

"Everything we do here is to drive our mission," says John Stika, CAB president, with a nod toward the goal of building demand for Angus genetics.

He welcomed groups of cattlemen and women to the brand's headquarters on Nov.

2, as part of the National Angus Tour and again for an open house on Nov. 5 after the National Angus Convention wrapped up.

"We are a full-service marketing organization. Anything our partners need to sell more pounds ... we do that here," Stika says.

CAB founding president Mick Colvin recalled some colorful stories that were "stumbling blocks" for

the program early on. He brought a firsthand account to near brand-ending board votes and the USDA cancellation. Those hurdles seem like distant memories now that CAB is in its 12<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of sale records, amounting to 1.21 billion pounds (lb.) in fiscal year 2018, he says.



## On tour

Guests roamed between the main office and Culinary Center, where they got a taste of everyday business as well as literally tasting why the brand they own is so successful.

If breeders wondered what the brand assurance did before the stop, they understood after Amanda Barstow, director of legal affairs,



At each stop, CAB staff brought their "everyday" to life for attendees. Cattlemen sampled steaks in the Brand Assurance division to learn why protecting the brand is so important.



passed out beef samples during her talk on protecting the trademark.

With a little pressure to rate those samples, people in the small groups shook their heads and admitted it was far from enjoyable. When Barstow revealed it was Select beef sold under a ruse as CAB, she didn't need to emphasize why it's so important to track and verify that businesses identifying their beef with the mark are selling the real deal.

"The only thing we own is this brand," she says. Barstow's team pulls in the reins on those reputation-ruining imposters.

Just up the stairs, marketing came to life as volunteers engaged in role playing. A breeder posing as "Steve from Steve's Steakhouse" was given everything from aprons and knives to social-media training and ad campaigns. The CAB staff kept piling on the tools for retailer and distributor, too.

In another 10 minutes, the rotation paused at a big screen watching the "Rare Moments Done Well" commercial



Each carcass that earns the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand must pass 10 exacting standards. Meat scientist Dianna Clark and Supply Development director Justin Sexten brought those specifications to life for attendees in the meat lab.

and identifying what red bubbles versus green mean in the social-media-monitoring software. That illustration showed how the brand leverages positive conversations and helps mitigate negative ones.

They made stops at the art department to talk about the significance of in-house printing, then learned value-added products philosophy in the test kitchen and saw a food shoot unfolding click by click in the photo studio.

## Center stage at The Center

Across the parking lot, The Culinary Center is used to visitors, but 400 during the course of a single day may be a record.

The brand's 10 carcass-based specifications came to life when Diana Clark, CAB meat scientist, walked through them one by one with a hanging side of beef to illustrate each.

"You don't want to pay for a Cadillac with a scratch on it," she

says, describing the reasons for zero tolerance on traits like dark cutters. "This is a premium brand, and we want to have a premium product."

That consistency is what drives value for all who market the product.

"Anybody can sell ribs, strips and tenders," says Justin Sexten, CAB director of supply development. "We work hard to add value to the entire carcass—that's our goal."

In the dining room, Chef Tony Biggs shared bold ideas they've taken to the culinary world, from bringing back the "steamship round" that was popular decades ago to a chuck roll cooked at the table in a cocktail smoker.

"We use The Culinary Center to educate food industry professionals. We teach people how

to cook beef; we inspire them with ideas," he says. It's a job they take seriously given the time going into the product: "It takes two years to raise and five minutes to ruin [in the kitchen]."

Guests shopped the extensive Black Hide Collection, the company's branded clothing line, display and a free resource room stocked with new rancher-focused educational materials. The team also unveiled its new Cattleman Connection website (CABcattle.com) during the event.

"We could have stayed and chatted for hours," says Erica Siler, Sivue Farms, North Java, N.Y. "It truly is a company whose mission is to help and support the producers who supply the product."

Stika says he hoped people left with pride in their brand and what their quality genetics have accomplished for the breed.

"We're not making that many more cattle that fast," he says. "Fortunately, we're making cattle a whole lot better with the use of Angus genetics." 



President John Stika says it was a day the staff enjoyed preparing for. "We're excited to have you here."

# Meat Sweats

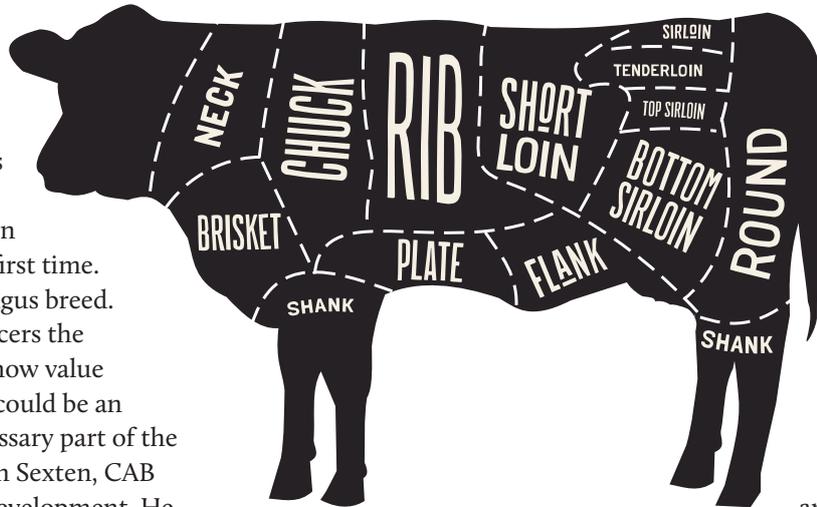
Nearly 100 attendees at the 2018 Angus Convention took part in a meats judging contest sponsored by the Certified Angus Beef® (CAB®) brand in partnership with The Ohio State University (OSU) Intercollegiate Meats Judging Team.

Story and photos by Laura Conaway, Certified Angus Beef LLC

The Nov. 4 event in Columbus, Ohio, brought past and current competitors into the ring as well as those interested in the process for the first time. All bound by the Angus breed.

“This gives producers the opportunity to see how value is assigned in what could be an unfamiliar but necessary part of the industry,” says Justin Sexten, CAB director of supply development. He helped facilitate the contest under the leadership of packing director Clint Walenciak.

Angus Convention attendees are familiar with judging live animals, Sexten obliged, but to see how meat



how those cuts are assessed at the in-between step of merchandising and marketing those to the consumer,” Pohlman says.

The Texan’s day job is to ensure the safety of employees and the safe production of beef for consumers. His nights and weekends belong to his Angus at home.

is priced by the packer and evaluated by the consumer in the meat case sheds light on the bigger picture.

“It allows cattlemen to think about how their breeding decisions will ultimately impact the end product,” Sexten says.

Not to mention how dollars end up back at the ranch.

Scott Pohlman, Pohlman Cattle Company, participated with a perspective from both sides of the aisle. Besides raising registered Angus cattle near Hereford, Texas, he is the general manager at Cargill Meat Solutions in Friona, Texas.

“This is a great opportunity for live animal producers to get engaged in evaluating subprimal and retail cuts to see

That responsibility pulled him to Angus Convention to learn and interact with fellow producers.

“The registered segment of the beef industry is where it all happens,” Pohlman says. “Decisions are made that help shape the final product we end up with in the beef plant, and the meats contest represented a great cross section of the industry.”

While no similar contest is set for next year yet, Sexten says the participation and positive feedback were more than his team anticipated.

“The most impactful thing was just the number of participants who enjoyed the memory of going through meats judging, who had judged previously,” he says.

Beyond that, many Angus producers who consume beef that



Contestants had two hours to judge five classes, all beef. Results are listed under National Angus Association Judging Contest on [Judgingcard.com](http://Judgingcard.com).

never saw a retail setting had the chance to see it on display. Thinking about that from the consumer's perspective was a fun exercise for attendees, Sexten adds.

An educational one, too.

The meats judging contest consisted of five classes: whole beef carcasses, beef rounds, ribs, porterhouse T-bones and a class of retail identification cuts that included the top round steak and flank steak, among others.

Participants were placed in three divisions: adult (22 and

older), young adult (14-21) and youth (13 and younger). Those placing second through fifth in all divisions received gift cards to shop CAB's branded clothing line in the Black Hide Collection, while division winners were awarded \$650 in Greeley Hat Works credit. OSU provided officials and tabulated results, with details available on [judgingcard.com](http://judgingcard.com). [AJ](#)

## 2018 Meats Contest Rankings

### Adult (22 and older)

- 1<sup>st</sup> Susan Schlosnagle
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Kelley Longanecker
- 3<sup>rd</sup> John Pfeiffer
- 4<sup>th</sup> Scott Pohlman
- 5<sup>th</sup> Douglas Chambers

### Youth (13 and younger)

- 1<sup>st</sup> Cole Walenciak
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Luke Walenciak
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Aubree McCurry
- 4<sup>th</sup> Michael Mendoza
- 5<sup>th</sup> McKinley Stoller

### Young Adult (14-21)

- 1<sup>st</sup> Ellie Kidwell
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Jessi Reichenbach
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Mackenzie Yorlets
- 4<sup>th</sup> Sam Stickley
- 5<sup>th</sup> Tarrah Freundd

### High Individual Overall

Ellie Kidwell



Scott Pohlman, Hereford, Texas, observes a class of beef ribs for placement. Pohlman was one of nearly 100 convention attendees to participate in the inaugural contest.