

Certified Angus Beef



What CAB Means to a Food Service Distributor

by Nancy Ann Sayre, Director of Marketing,
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Take a mix of cattle sporting the influence of some 50 breeds . . . throw in our country's vastly differing environments . . . add the cattle industry's variety of feeding, management and marketing programs. . . rattle these cattle down a packing plant line at the rate of 350 an hour. . . run the carcasses by a USDA grader who accepts nearly 90 percent of what he grades as Choice, and put the resulting variety pack in a box . . . then assure the chef at the Ritz Carlton that every steak he serves will please his very discriminating customers.

Difficult, at best!!

I could make this very short and sweet and just say "thank you" – thank you for a program that offers us a consistently high quality product, a program that allows us to assure New England's top chefs that every steak they serve will be of the quality they expect. I'll expand, though, on our business and the role Certified Angus Beef plays in our success.

Dole & Bailey is a food service distributor. We supply New England's finest hotels, restaurants, resorts, country clubs and caterers with quality foods. Our product list ranges from the finest beef, veal, lamb, pork and poultry, to caviar, smoked salmon and other specialty foods, to fresh fish from all parts of the world. Our profile changes constantly with consumer and dining trends, but quality beef remains the backbone of our business.

The demand for tender, flavorful beef always exists. A big part of our job has been to find that product, but that has become more and more difficult. You know the reasons. The result of today's cattle business is far from consistent, and the product packed in today's "Choice, Yield Grade 3 or better" boxes is not consistent either – at least, not consistent enough for the chef of the Ritz Carlton to guarantee his customers a memorable meal.

Our customers are chefs, and the good ones are a finicky bunch. Their customers turn to them for one reason: dining pleasure. They cannot tolerate or afford mistakes, so they turn to us to sort through

the "variety pack" in today's beef boxes. We pride ourselves (and always have) in finding the highest, quality beef. Our hand-selection program and specialty cutting teams allow us to meet any cus-



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tomers individual needs. The Certified Angus Beef Program simply makes this easier.

When we sell Certified Angus Beef, we are no longer selling Dole & Bailey's word that our beef is the highest quality available. We are selling an assurance:

- * We are selling the fact that the American Angus Association – a group of 25,000 cattle breeders – developed superior specifications for the meat industry. They developed these specs because they know their breed inherently produces higher quality beef.
- * We are selling the fact that a USDA grader stands at the line, and railed off are carcasses meeting top of the Choice grade, Yield Grade 3 or leaner, "A" maturity, etc. A trained USDA grader evaluates and certifies carcasses quality-conscious buyers want.
- * We are selling the brand recognition, the logo. Over 65 million pounds of the

best beef in the world are being sold under the Certified Angus Beef logo annually, hardly by accident. It has been a long, hard road to pull a branded beef product out of our commodity beef chain. We appreciate the efforts and the superior product.

In a nutshell, the Certified Angus Beef Program allows us to ensure consistent quality to our customers. You've heard that, I'm sure, but it cannot be emphasized enough. Our buyers pay a premium for Certified Angus Beef, and our customers pay a premium. Our Certified Angus Beef sales have increased impressively. Obviously, the assurance of consistent quality is important – so important that we use Certified Angus Beef as our standard of quality. Our product catalog features 3,000 items – the best meats, seafood and specialty foods the world has to offer. We open with Certified Angus Beef and this introduction:

"Widely recognized as the highest quality beef available, Certified Angus Beef is our specialty. We are proud to be New England's exclusive distributor of Certified Angus Beef. In fact, the Certified Angus Beef logo (a registered trademark) is seen nearly everywhere our name appears. Why? It's a symbol of quality . . . and we think that sums up our philosophy well."

The Certified Angus Beef logo is a symbol of quality. In a commodity world of unacceptable variation, Certified Angus Beef makes our job much easier.

P.S. We'll leave you with a challenge. Varied as it is, we know our cattle industry can produce (and is producing) groups of cattle which do much better than the average 22-25 percent Certified Angus Beef acceptance. We would love to have access to such cattle. As we see it, it's another step.

