

Gourmet Beef Shoppe

Featuring Certified Angus Beef

by Evelyn B. Wycle

The Certified Angus Beef (CAB) program has made strong headway during its five-year existence and it continues to thrive. Yet another outlet for the promotion and distribution of CAB is prospering in Slidell, La.

Dwayne and Kay Shockley opened the Gourmet Beef Shoppe last August, specializing in the sale of CAB.

"The repeat business has been unbelievable," said Mrs. Shockley about the shop. "Once you get used to eating CAB, you can't go back to eating anything else!"

The Shockley's became interested in going into business for themselves some time ago. "I was a secretary and Dwayne worked in a wholesale wine cellar. We both had progressed as far as we could in our jobs, so we started looking for something else," Mrs. Shockley explained.

After considering the retail meat business, the Shockley's ventured into several meat tests, searching for the one to best suit their business needs. "This meat (CAB) came out on top every time," Mrs. Shockley remarked.

The couple then opened the Gourmet Beef Shoppe where they feature CAB and carry other such "gourmet" foods as cold water lobster tails, egg rolls, chicken Kiev, chicken cordon bleu, Alaskan king crab, New York cheesecake, and quiche. They also stock a wide variety of wines; Shockley is experienced in their selection and handling.

Unlike an ordinary butcher shop, the walls are covered with elaborate wallpaper and the floors with plush carpeting. Several ceiling fans hang over racks of a wide range of wines.

Mrs. Shockley laughed, "People come in and say, 'Hey, this doesn't look like a meat shop!' They expect us to be wearing white aprons with blood stains." Dwayne and Kay have matching outfits to further enhance the Gourmet Beef Shoppe's first class atmosphere.

Shockley's have worked hard since the start to promote CAB. In October they held their grand opening celebration, where the public was invited to come and taste the CAB products, among other things. The Angus beef was grilled over an open flame and served without seasonings. Samples of wine, cheesecake, tamales, weiners, and other Gourmet Beef Shoppe foods were available for tasting.

Several CAB promoters were on hand at the grand opening. Allen Coulocovski, the representative for Ak-Sar-Ben Beef Co., Omaha, attended. The Gourmet Beef Shoppe deals strictly with this company for its supplies.

Also attending the celebration was Mick

Colvin, executive director of the CAB program. Colvin has worked very closely with the program, designed to promote and protect the identity of the animal and to increase the demand for registered Angus bulls.

A small retail store in Columbia, Mo. served as a test market for the program's beginning in November 1978. "We wanted to start slow to get a good solid foundation for our procedures and quality specification. Then we took on a few more retail stores and had good, steady growth," said Colvin. Finally, in the summer of 1982, a food service supply line was established. The fabrication agreement was worked out and the first distributor for restaurants was signed on.

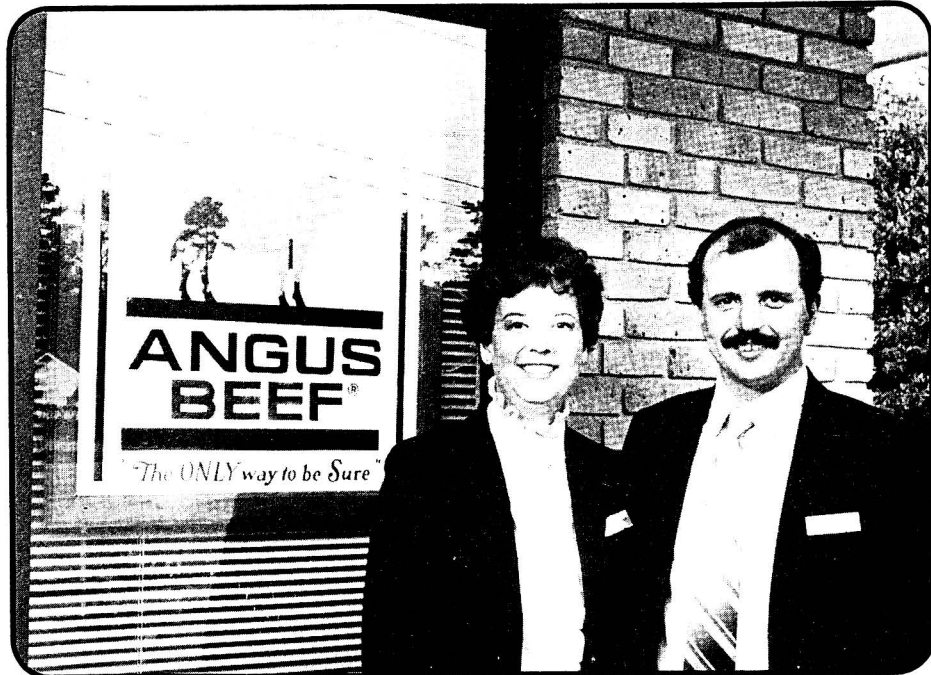
"It's almost unbelievable, the amount of interest there's been," Colvin continued. "We are just now completing our first full year in food service. That's where our growth has been. It's been fantastic. Skyrocketed. We can't keep up with it!"

Mrs. Shockley comments the same about their retail store, the Gourmet Beef Shoppe. "Our problem has been educating the people on CAB. But once we get them to try it they keep coming back," she said. "We have one lady who comes in very week to buy hamburger patties. She told us, 'We can't afford to buy steaks, but we just love the hamburger meat and we can afford that!'"

The Shockley's get many questions on the price and quality of their beef, but Mrs. Shockley says, "You can't compare us (CAB) with grocery store meat. It's not the same thing. CAB is guaranteed to be high quality beef," she said.

With the progress that has been made since 1978, the promotion and distribution of CAB continues to grow. And it's people like the Shockley's and their Gourmet Beef Shoppe that are the building blocks of that growth.

AJ



Kay and Dwayne Shockley feature Certified Angus Beef in their Gourmet Beef Shoppe. Repeat business is unbelievable, they say.