

Certified Angus Beef



From Junior Projects to Senior Management

Young people who have raised Angus cattle are very familiar with the production end of the beef industry and probably have a good idea of the career opportunities available within that segment. Less widely recognized, however, are the unlimited beef industry career options beyond the production level.

The Certified Angus Beef Program is unique in that it incorporates all segments of the industry — from seedstock producers to chefs. The diversification allows a broad perspective of opportunities available to young people interested in a career in the beef industry.

The program is fortunate to boast several outstanding individuals who started in the beef business as National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members. Their marketing experiences have exposed them to a different view of the business they once thought centered around the live animal.

Bill Wylie, a former Pennsylvania Junior Angus Association member, serves as account executive for Facciola Meat Company, a licensed CAB food service distributor based in Palo Alto, Calif. "I see beef primarily in the box now. My customers have little interest of its past with hide phenotype or even its individual performance," says Wylie.

After earning a bachelor's degree in agricultural business management from Pennsylvania State University, Wylie served as the CAB Program's food service division director. "This is where my real education in beef marketing began because I worked with more than 40 distributors," he says. In 1990, he left the program to join Facciola Meat Company and now markets center of the plate food products to hotels and restaurants on the Monterey Peninsula of California.

"My career has afforded me a peek at the big picture behind beef production. Sire evaluation for carcass traits hold my attention much more now than when I was a junior member," explains Wylie.

He recommends that juniors interested in the marketing field take as many business courses in college as possible. He

adds, "Look at your junior Angus project as a business in itself, actually applying your AHIR data to your own cattle is about as real as it gets."

Another former Pennsylvania Junior Angus member, **Kirke McKean**, has found success merchandising CAB products. McKean, owner of McKean's Fine Foods in Cochranton, Pa., grew up with a broad perspective of the entire beef industry. His family raised Angus cattle, ran a slaughter house and owned a supermarket.



Kirke McKean

After graduating from Penn State University with a degree in agricultural economics, McKean joined the CAB Program staff serving in several capacities, including director of retail operations until 1991. He says the experience "tied all the industry pieces into one package."

The supermarket that he now operates with his wife, Melanie, requires attention in many different areas, but the CAB Program is still close to heart.

"The challenge with selling Certified Angus Beef products at the retail level is the price of the middle meats," explains McKean. He adds that his Angus background makes it a little easier to respond to his customers' price sensitivity.

Regardless of his company affiliations, **Chris Beck** has always been a strong proponent of the CAB Program. As an Ohio Junior Angus Association member, Beck thought show ring performance was the most important aspect of the beef industry. After spending time as herdsman for R&J Ranch in Briggs, Texas, and serving as a telephone sales representative for

IBP, he quickly discovered that a balance needs to exist between show ring and production performance.

For the past two years Beck has served as beef/lamb/veal buyer for Butler Refrigerated Meats, a licensed CAB retail distributor. His focus now is on the quality of the end product. "Angus breeders must produce animals that meet quality specifications of the program while reducing outside fat," says Beck.

Pursuing advanced education is his suggestion for young Angus youth planning a career in beef marketing. He received a bachelor of science in animal science from Ohio State University. "Education broadens horizons and provides critical exposure to the rest of the world," says Beck.

In addition to completing basic college courses, **Mary Ferguson**, former Ohio Junior Angus member, encourages youth to read livestock, meat and food industry publications, participate in industry meetings and conferences, and obtain as much practical experience as possible while attending school.

Ferguson gained a variety of practical experience while at Kansas State University as assistant manager of the KSU Meats Laboratory, Cooperative Extension assistant and graduate teaching assistant.

After receiving a master of science degree in animal science, production and management, Ferguson joined the CAB Program staff as director of marketing concepts and today serves as associate director.

"Working in the marketing branch of our industry has certainly helped me appreciate the fact that we are in not only the cattle business but also the beef business and, therefore, the food business," says Ferguson.

She adds, "It's a fast-paced, aggressive and competitive world where tradition and sentimentality quickly take a back seat to hard-line decisions that must sometimes result in immediate bottom line returns."

Ferguson points to the self-satisfaction of knowing efforts in the area of beef promotion and marketing translate into ben-

efits that will be realized by Angus cattle producers today and in years to come.

"The greatest challenge," she says, "is educating those people in the food industry with non-agricultural backgrounds about properly evaluating beef quality and simply appreciating the value of beef in the human diet."

Tim Hussman is executive vice president of Newport Meat Company, a licensed CAB food service distributor located in Irvine, Calif., and former member of the Maryland Junior Angus Association. He also finds it challenging to explain to his customers that beef products are not machine parts.

"Our customers are not concerned about the color of the hide; they want quality and consistency," says Hussman.

A Virginia Tech graduate, Hussman was employed as manager of the Eastern Livestock Show and as assistant director of the CAB Program prior to joining Newport Meat Company, Hussman says his production background provides a different viewpoint than others in the food industry of what is behind a piece of meat.

Although he enjoyed his experiences of showing Angus cattle and being a part of the Virginia Tech Livestock Judging Team, Hussman now realizes that "the height of an animal has nothing to do with plate presentation and product consistency." He stresses that juniors should take a broad view of their role in the beef industry, concentrating on end-product and customers.

Each of these successful marketers play a critical role in the beef industry. Their affiliation with NJAA played an important part in their decisions to be involved in the industry today. As a result, their enthusiastic strides are ensuring a future for all segments of the beef industry — from producer to consumer.

—**Jenny Plocher**

Elkins Joins Certified Angus Beef Program Staff

The Certified Angus Beef Program has appointed Kelly Elkins as director of feedlot and packing operations of its supply development division, and as assistant director of its packing division.

As director of feedlot and packing operations of the supply development division, Elkins will locate feeder and fed cattle sired by registered Angus bulls, channel identified cattle from commercial feedlots to licensed CAB packing plants and coordinate a carcass data collection program. She will assist the packing division director by maintaining communications with licensed CAB packers and fabricators, developing cattle/carcass buying programs with packers and licensing new plants.

Elkins received both her bachelor's degree in agricultural business in 1989 and master's degree in animal science in 1991 from Colorado State University. While at Colorado State, she researched the economic effects of individual carcass pricing of various cattle types as well as optimal slaughter endpoints in different pricing scenarios.

She gained experience as assistant instructor of livestock and carcass evaluation laboratories, carcass data collector at various packing plants and member of Colorado State's National Agri-Marketing Association.



Kelly Elkins

CAB Participants Purchase National Western Champion

Lombardi Brothers Meat Packers, a licensed Certified Angus Beef food service distributor, and Paul's Place Restaurant, a licensed Certified Angus Beef restaurant operation with three locations in Denver, purchased the grand champion steer at the 1992 National Western Stock Show.

The 1,285 pound crossbred Angus steer, exhibited by Jerry Tucker from Lindsay, Okla., sold for \$18,000.

Irwin S. Fishman, president of the Denver-based Lombardi Brothers, reports the beef will be processed and distributed to homeless shelters around Denver.

The CAB Program extends a special thanks to Lombardi Brothers and Paul's Place for their support of the production segment of the Angus cattle industry.

New Date Set for Feedlot Gain & Carcass Contest Open House

The Certified Angus Beef Program announces a date change for the 1992 Feedlot Gain & Carcass Contest Open House. The event will be held Saturday, May 2, at the Decatur County Feed Yard located in Oberlin, Kan.

A detailed agenda and registration information will be published in the April issue of the *Angus Journal*. The open house will give contest participants and others interested an opportunity to view the cattle just prior to the estimated sale dates.

For more information about the open house, contact Kelly Elkins, director of feedlot and packing operations at the Certified Angus Beef Denver office, (303) 420-0936.