

Strengthen Your Story With Data

New messaging, same great taste for the Certified Angus Beef® brand.

by Morgan Boecker, Certified Angus Beef

It's easy to be content today if you don't look to the future. But change is inevitable for improvement. The *Certified Angus Beef®* (CAB) brand is often advertised as "the best." As a younger generation of consumers has more buying power, their expectations are expanding.

"Our product has to taste great every time, and the consumer has to feel good about what the brand stands for," says Nicole Erceg, CAB communications director. "They seek products they think are good for them, the animal and the planet."

When asked about sustainability, animal welfare is the Number 1 consumer concern, Erceg says, followed by the environment.

"The way we reach most consumers is at the meatcase," she says. "So, as we think about telling your story, it has to be simple and fit on a package."

Starting in 2023, consumers may see the statement "Dedicated to Humane Animal Care and Climate-Friendly Practices" on packaging and marketing of the CAB brand.

"We landed on this statement through consumer research," Erceg says. "It's obviously not something that connects with cattlemen; those aren't words we'd use to describe cattle production. But it is what cattle producers are doing, and it resonates with consumers."

Supporting the statement requires more information on production practices to verify how you're caring for cattle and managing the land.

While quantifying practices at the ranch is challenging, accredited certifications like Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) verify producers' dedication to animal welfare to consumers.

"It's doing things like BQA certification, keeping good production records and having a grazing management plan," Erceg says, speaking about increasing consumers' trust. "As a food marketer, I can take that information and use it to garner more value for your product."

If you're BQA certified and would like to share your certificate with CAB, visit www.CutTheBull.info.

Taking care of the land also provides sustainable resources for cattlemen to raise premium beef. The Working Grasslands Conservation Initiative supports the "climate-friendly" part of the marketing claim by creating a collaboration to measure environmental practices with Ducks Unlimited.

"We are experts of beef," says Kirsten Nickles, CAB animal care and sustainability scientist, "and Ducks Unlimited has conservation experts and access to research that quantifies how cattle and grasslands are essential to a healthy ecosystem."

The initiative supports a voluntary suite of programs for producers in the northern Great Plains and collects data measuring carbon sequestration, soil health improvements, clean water resource development and biodiversity.



Starting this year, you may see "Dedicated to Humane Animal Care and Climate-friendly Practices" on *Certified Angus Beef* brand marketing. It's an effort to resonate with consumers who want to feel good about the beef they buy.

"This allows us to gather actual metrics in a variety of environments and share it through the supply chain," Nickles says.

While data is still being collected, initial findings will be released later this year.

Investing in the future

The best beef used to be a great-tasting, consistent steak. That's still important, but now we have to deliver more. Consumer preferences are driven by the supply chain and their sustainability commitments.

Whether you're marketing Angus bulls or commercial feeder cattle, the more information you can collect on an animal, the wider your customer base is, Erceg says.

"That's really what we're trying to do at the brand — look for ways to add value along the chain," she adds. "And producers are at the very beginning and have the most information to share about that calf." ^{AJ}

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