



CERTIFIED ANGUS BEEF

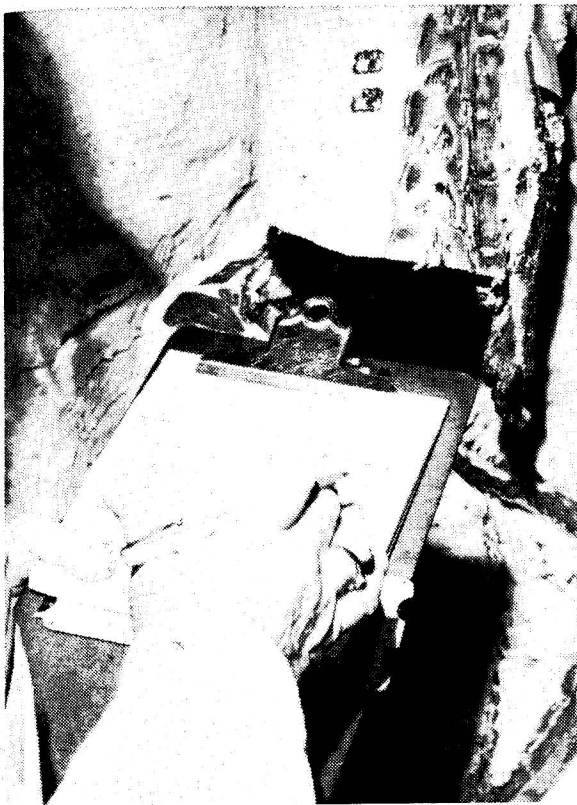
By Miki Tolle

*“The ONLY way
to be Sure”*

Beef, unlike most other consumer products, has never been sold with a specific marketing approach, until recently. In October of 1978 Certified Angus Beef (CAB) was successfully test marketed in Columbus, Ohio. April of this year marked the initial expansion of the Certified Angus Beef Program into Columbia, Missouri. This move into Missouri was the first step in plans to expand sales of Certified Angus Beef nationwide. Now, for the first time in the history of U.S. beef production the consumer will be able to ask for Certified Angus Beef.

“We’re going to identify our superior product in the market place,” said Fred Johnson, chairman of the Certified Angus Beef Program Committee.

“We’re not taking the position that Angus beef is the only good beef in the world, what we’re saying is the CAB program has very strict quality standards and when that stamp is on a carcass that meets or exceeds all the requirements, the



A USDA Grader insures that the carcasses meet the American Angus Association certification standards.



The first Angus carcass to be approved for the Certified Angus Beef Program that was initiated October 18, 1978 in Columbus, Ohio.

consumer can buy CAB with assurance of quality backed by the American Angus Association," Johnson said.

The Certified Angus Beef Program, designed to provide the consumer with high quality, tasty, tender beef every time they shop, is, "an outgrowth of the decline of USDA beef quality grading standards, combined with desire on the part of many Angus breeders for a program to identify the superior Angus beef carcass traits and market them to consumers," said Louis "Mick" Colvin, director of the Certified Angus Beef Program for the American Angus Association.

The Angus beef identity is maintained from the live animal to the individual retail cut on the supermarket shelf. In the CAB program the packing plant finds and purchases the Angus cattle to be slaughtered.

Continued on page 204



Checking over the first carcasses to be evaluated for the Certified Angus Beef Program are William Decker (left), of Val Decker Packing Company, Piqua, Ohio, where the cattle were slaughtered for the test market in Columbus and Louis "Mick" Colvin, director of the program for the American Angus Association.

Packers have the cattle identified by the kill floor superintendent who is trained to identify Angus characteristics. Once the identification process is completed the carcasses must meet the following seven qualifications as determined by a USDA grader:

1. Have at least modest (average choice) marbling.
2. Fall within "A" maturity range.
3. Yield grade 3 or better for Prime and no higher than the mid-point of the 3 grade for Choice.
4. Lean must have "fine" texture.
5. Marbling must be "fine" to "medium" texture.
6. Meat must be moderately firm with no indication of softness.
7. Color of lean must be slightly dark red or lighter.

The carcasses which are quality graded, rolled either Prime or Choice and meet or exceed the seven CAB specifications are then stamped by the federal grader with the USDA's "Accepted As Specified" stamp. (Certified Angus Beef comes only from the upper portion of the Choice grade and from the USDA Prime grade). These "accepted" carcasses are eligible to be rolled by the packer with the trade mark "Certified Angus Beef."

"Certified Angus Beef is going to give us a massive amount of carcass information we've never been able to get before and that carcass information will lead to a genuine beef improvement program," Johnson said.

Once the beef is certified it is sold to the retail. Although the American Angus Association administers the program, but does not take ownership of the cattle or beef, participating packers and retailers must sign an agreement with the American Angus Association that explains how the program is to operate. Both packer and retailer are therefore subject to unannounced inspections by a CAB representative to insure quality control.

The American Angus Association, in addition to administering the program, furnishes carcass rolls, stamps and logo cuts to the packer for identifying carcasses and also for printing on boxes.

Nationwide advertising is planned to put the CAB program into full operation. "We want to generate income to spend on market promotion to the consumer," Johnson said.

At this point advertising is limited to point of purchase display material plus booklets and folders on beef cooking and the proper care and preparation of Certified Angus Beef provided by the

Association. In addition, the Association helps with the initial publicity and promotion when a retail outlet begins featuring Certified Angus Beef. Also, every Sunday a Columbia, Missouri paper advertises Certified Angus Beef.

The CAB program is currently in Phase I which is essentially the introduction of the program.

The Phase II program will be identical to the Phase I program except, in Phase II of the program, the American Angus Association will identify cattle sired by registered Angus Bulls at the farm or ranch and then follow them through the feedlot, packing plant, retail outlet and finally to the consumer. Premiums will be paid to Registered Angus Breeders, by the American Angus Association, who have registered Angus bulls that have sired cattle used in the CAB program.

In order for the Phase II program to begin, a market must be developed and a greater availability of cattle to packers must be assured Colvin said.

"I would like to tag the first Phase II calves next spring," Colvin said. This would put the Phase II program into operation in approximately two to

Continued on page 210

CERTIFIED ANGUS BEEF
Continued from page 206

three years because it would be at least one and a half to two years before those calves would be ready for market he said.

Hopefully Phase I will develop the market we need for Phase II Colvin said. We would like to get the CAB program into every state. In order for this to happen any Registered Angus Breeder or American Angus staff member who knows of a producer, processor or retailer who is interested in the program should contact me right away.

Contact Louis "Mick" Colvin at Route 2, West Salem, Ohio 44287 phone: 419/846-3534 or at the American Angus Association, 3201 Frederick Boulevard, St. Joseph, Missouri 64501 phone: 816/233-3101.

"There are a great deal of consumers who are quality conscious and want to buy quality beef," Colvin said. So this program can and will work if producers, packers and retailers are willing to give the program a try, he said. 