

HoneyBaked Foods Joins Quality Partnership

When HoneyBaked Foods Inc., decided to add beef to its mail order catalog, it began looking for the product with the most similar relationship in quality and experience to its own.

"That's what Certified Angus Beef™ product offered," says Keith Kurz, HoneyBaked Foods president. "And we found the CAB Program to be a quality organization from top to bottom."

The product came highly recommended from outside sources such as meat purveyors and industry consultants. The search for a quality beef line for HoneyBaked began with John Baker, Dawson-Baker Packing, Louisville, Ky., and Andy Malcolm, Malcolm Meats, Northwood, Ohio, both licensed Certified Angus Beef (CAB) Program participants.

"Every time we conducted research, Certified Angus Beef product came out on top," says Dan Kurz, HoneyBaked Foods director of operations.

In August 1993, HoneyBaked Foods, Holland, Ohio, became licensed to promote Certified Angus Beef product as the only beef in its mail order catalog. "We have not received a complaint about quality to date," Dan says.

The company is a mail order division of The HoneyBaked Ham Company, renown for its signature item—HoneyBaked Ham™.

Harry J. Hoenselaar, Keith's grandfather, created the ham spiral-slicing process in the 1950s. After an unsuccessful attempt to sell the slicing machine at an inventor's fair, he devel-

oped the unique curing and cooking procedure for this high quality, bone-in smoked ham. Hoenselaar then began marketing this ready-to-eat gourmet ham through his Detroit, Mich., retail store in 1957.

"We have built a niche market and remained the leader due to his insight into ready-to-eat foods," Keith says.

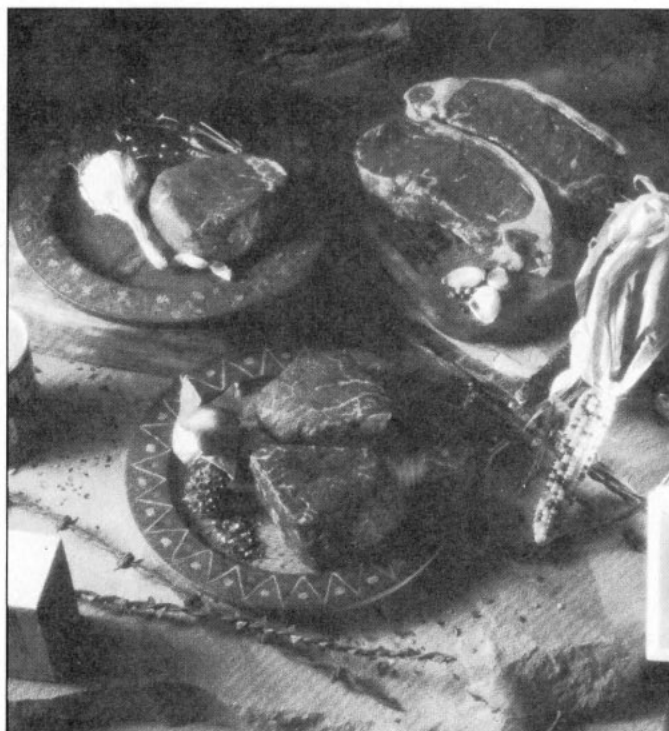
The number of HoneyBaked Ham stores now stands at 250 nationwide. Over the years, consumer demand created the need for the stores to begin shipping product from their individual facilities. The Ohio plant was built in 1984 to focus the company's mail order business from one location.

The mail order catalog promises superior quality, value and convenience. "It features high quality gourmet foods to be used as entrees for entertaining or gift giving," Keith says.

When selecting products for the catalog, HoneyBaked accepts only those worthy enough to complement the ham. The catalog features several HoneyBaked items and a diverse selection of brand name products for seafood, jumbo cashews, coffee and dessert.

"We don't want to brand everything with the HoneyBaked name," Keith explains. "We let experts provide us with high quality food products bearing their brand name." However, he adds, "Our consumers demand us to be experts in beef as well."

That's why HoneyBaked Foods selected licensed food service distributor, Malcolm Meats, to further trim Certified



Angus Beef product to restaurant quality cuts.

For shipping perishable items, technology plays a key role in consumer confidence. Modern technology allows this food company to get the product to the customer through good packaging techniques and reliable distribution.

"The biggest thing to overcome in the consumer's mind is the state of delivery," Keith says. "The customer must receive a high quality package each and every time whether it's delivered to Florida or Colorado."

The company aggressively communicates consistency to its customers. Keith feels consumer confidence is growing for food sales by mail order. Consistent, quality products, combined with modern shipping techniques, helps increase

that confidence.

As a licensed CAB Program participant, HoneyBaked must now create awareness of the product specifications and quality among its customers. To assist with this process, the company employs continual research and education.

HoneyBaked began with the sales representatives, both full-time and holiday field staff. With Malcolm Meats and CAB Program representatives in attendance, the field staff received formal training, watched a CAB Program educational video and sampled Certified Angus Beef tenderloin. In addition, HoneyBaked held promotions for staff during the holiday season. If they sold a certain amount of Certified Angus Beef product, they earned a gift package of beef.

For research, the company

STORY BY CRYSTAL MEIER, CAB PROGRAM

conducted focus group studies comprised of field staff members who had interaction with customers. HoneyBaked learned that consumers thought the beef line offered a good selection. However, there was a low degree of awareness of Certified Angus Beef product quality characteristics compared to other beef.

Every Certified Angus Beef product shipment from HoneyBaked includes product information, recipes, and storage and handling tips. "We must continue to communicate even more to consumers how to handle and serve it," Dan says.

A combination of field staff training, promotions, product sampling and focus groups provided HoneyBaked Foods with the opportunity to gain extensive information about how consumers perceived the product. "Once you taste Certified

Angus Beef product, you're a customer," Keith says.

The company is trying to interest consumers in HoneyBaked Foods as a source of quality products all year, not just at holiday times. For the

first time in the company's history, a summer promotion will feature Certified Angus Beef product on the cover of the HoneyBaked catalog. The promotion will tie-in with the summer grilling season.

To receive a HoneyBaked Foods catalog or to locate the nearest store, call (800) 892-4267, or write HoneyBaked Foods Inc., P.O. Box 965, Holland, OH 43528-0965.

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