



Knowing the industry

As a meat and poultry specialist at Sysco, Landry trains employees and works with some of the company's key customers. He even hosted an American Angus Association staff meeting at the Olathe, Kan., facility. He also knows cattle.

"He has a great understanding of the challenges cattle producers face and is very effective in working with restaurateurs through seasonalities of cuts and market cycles for more profitable menu planning," says Bill Wylie, CAB assistant foodservice director.

"I just listen to the customer and what their needs are," Landry says. "Most of the employees say they don't know anything about meat, so I take them to the grocery store to show them what they've been buying all these years. They usually realize they know more than they thought they did."

It's important that employees understand what CAB product is and how it differs from other beef products, Landry says, because the employees are key to maintaining the integrity of CAB.

Hospital openings

Landry played a major part in getting seven hospitals to purchase CAB product in order to upgrade their image. While they aren't buying tenderloins, Landry says he thinks it helps diminish the old notion that hospital food is unpalatable.

"They look on the menu and they see the CAB symbol and think 'that's the same stuff I had in that fancy restaurant last week — this must be good.'"

"The health care segment is huge, and John almost single-handedly opened up this untapped market by licensing a key player," Wylie says, referring to Via Christi Regional Medical Center in Wichita, Kan.

Patti Dollarhide, the food and nutrition services director at Via Christi, met Landry at a CAB "Stampede" seminar for restaurant operators in 1999 and subsequently became licensed. Dollarhide, with the same

All for a Smile

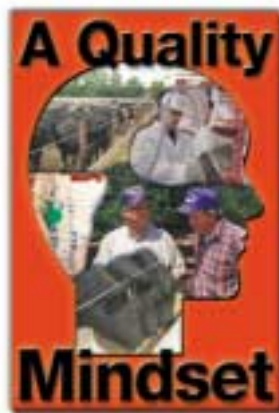
CAB® center-of-plate specialist John Landry brings excitement and excellence to the table.

STORY & PHOTOS BY JENNIFER RYAN

With an infectious smile and a cheerful attitude, John Landry seems right at home in Sysco Food Services's 300,000-square-foot distribution center near Kansas City, Kan. He knows each and every person — from the boardroom to the loading docks — and is quick to ask about each co-worker's family.

Landry is not one for office cubicles. It's the people and the product that he says keeps work interesting.

The chef and Sysco meat and poultry specialist maintains that the key to enjoying work is selling a good product, which he's found in the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand.



Landry says if he sold cars, he would sell Cadillacs because they are the best. Instead of selling cars, Landry sells top-of-the-line beef.

"If you sell mediocre products, it's a constant

struggle," Landry says. "If you sell quality products, you only have to do it right one time. Then you can play golf and enjoy yourself. All I have to do is tell customers the truth; it's real easy with CAB."

CAB product sales account for an estimated 75% of all branded beef products certified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and Landry says his work with Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) as a center-of-plate specialist helps put the brand in the forefront of that nationwide success.

"It's not just a box with a symbol," Landry says. "It's a whole lot of work that goes into that."

Above: John Landry (left) works with Sysco beef merchandiser Greg DeBoer to purchase all the CAB® items they can in place of commodity Choice. That helps CAB solidify its supply base with packers.

infectious enthusiasm as Landry, “went forth and spread the word to other hospitals,” which resulted in more sales in this segment for her new friends at Sysco and CAB, Wylie explains (see “Following doctors’ approval,” September 2000 *Angus Journal*, page 231). Via Christi’s main CAB items purchased are top round and ground beef.

Valued partner

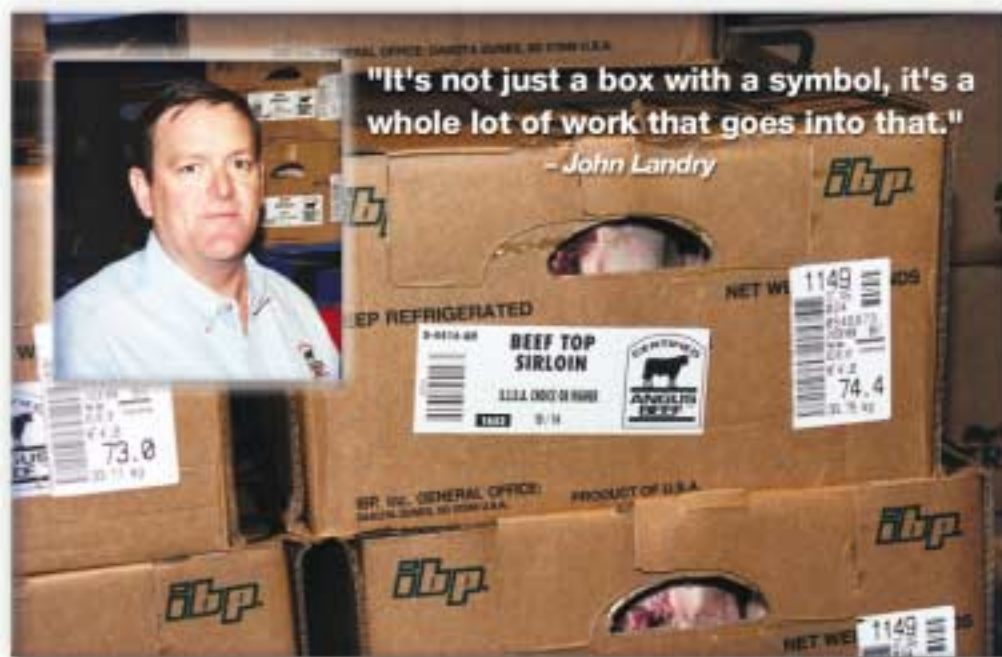
Landry, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America at Hyde Park, N.Y., became familiar with CAB through previous work experience. The brand has been a key to Sysco’s success.

“They’ve done a terrific job of merchandising the entire CAB carcass from the time they kicked off CAB in September 1999,” Wylie says. Roughly 70% of Sysco Kansas City’s CAB volume is derived from the chuck, round, grinds and “thin meats — CAB briskets are by far Sysco’s No. 1 item, given all the pit barbecue houses in the KC market.”

Sysco had one of the quickest starts ever for a new foodservice distributor, purchasing more than 300,000 pounds (lb.) in its sixth month with CAB, Wylie says. “John works with Sysco’s beef merchandiser, Greg DeBoer, to purchase all the CAB items they possibly can in place of commodity Choice. He understands that helps the entire CAB Program solidify our supply base with licensed packers.”

“That’s just one example of how John has gotten his whole Sysco team behind CAB. Through teamwork, John continues to reach a much larger audience than is traditionally exposed to the CAB brand through its distributors,” Wylie says.

“Center-of-plate specialists are key to taking the CAB message to the public — developing new products and sharing success,” says Mark Polzer, CAB foodservice director. “Sysco KC has more than 100 sales representatives



The wall of John Landry’s office stands testimony to his enthusiasm for the CAB brand.



Roughly 70% of Sysco Kansas City’s CAB volume is derived from the chuck, round, grinds and thin meats.

across western Missouri and all of Kansas, so the specialist role is a critical component to communicating the CAB story, policies, marketing ideas and the like to restaurant operators.

“Most importantly, CAB specialists gain personal commitment and responsibility for the CAB brand in the field,” Polzer adds.

The toughest crowd

Landry demonstrates the potential for a specialist in projecting the CAB image. In a letter to Sysco executive Jim Hope, Angus producer Mary Ferguson expressed her gratitude to Landry for delivering a great eating experience to the 2000 Kansas Angus Tour.

“John Landry went way above and beyond the call of duty by offering to not only hand select, age and cut the beef but also to deliver the product to the ranch, prepare and serve it,” Ferguson wrote. “In addition, upon his arrival here at the ranch (after an approximate four-hour drive from Kansas City), John also helped us with numerous last-minute event preparations unrelated to the beef product itself.”

Ferguson was a CAB employee prior to moving to Kansas in 1994 to establish Wolf Creek Angus Ranch. She says Landry’s enthusiasm for the product and skill in preparing it won over the crowd.

“Although I know there are many great individuals involved in contributing to the CAB Program’s success within foodservice and other tiers of the Program, it is rare that I’ve met someone with the dedication John Landry exhibited this past weekend. To me, his efforts spoke volumes about the tremendous potential Sysco Corp. has to become a top distributor of *Certified Angus Beef* products,” Ferguson says.

To Landry, it’s just another day at work. “It’s fun to go to work everyday and meet the people I meet and do the things I do,” he says.

