

Advocating for Beef from Denver to D.C.

Angus breed has strong presence at the Young Cattlemen's Conference.

by Chloe Fowler, Angus Communications intern

The 2018 Young Cattlemen's Conference (YCC), hosted by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), is the most influential meeting in the beef industry to help young cattlemen and women enhance their leadership skills and to provide them with networking opportunities.

YCC features industry leaders and representatives delivering their input and opinions on the forecast of the beef industry and policy issues affecting cattlemen and women nationwide.

John Dickinson, Sacramento, Calif., representative of the Angus Foundation and Kelli Retallick,

Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI) genetic services director, were chosen to represent the American Angus Association on the trip. Members of the Association who also attended the conference include Cole Barber, Will Mayfield, George Stovall, Andy Bishop, Jake Thames, Bradfield Evans and Katelyn Wilson.

Each year, the Angus Foundation selects one outstanding young individual to be its representative to promote the industry for the next generation, and this year Dickinson was chosen. Originally from Illinois, Dickinson moved to California in 1999 as a regional manager for the Association. Though he has since left

the Association, he says he is truly grateful for the influence it had on him and the connections he made. He has continued to stay involved with the beef industry.

"We are happy to nominate someone to attend YCC each year on behalf of the Foundation to further the breed as well as promote the industry as a whole," says Milford Jenkins, Angus Foundation president. "We give a sincere thank you to our generous supporters who enable us to continue to provide this opportunity."

One person is also selected to represent the Association at YCC, and this year, Kelli Retallick was



Visiting NCBA's headquarters in Colorado are (from left) Kelli Retallick; John Dickinson; Jake Thames; George Stovall; Cole Barber; Andy Bishop; Katelyn Wilson; Bradfield Evans; and Will Mayfield.

chosen. A former National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) board member, Retallick grew up in the seedstock industry in Glen Haven, Wis. She has worked as the director of genetic services for AGI for more than two years.

Coming from a beef background, she was familiar with the process of raising cattle, but still gained many different perspectives from her colleagues on the YCC trip, as well as the various experiences.

“YCC is an extremely beneficial program, and we are happy to have the Angus breed so well represented year after year,” says Allen Moczygamba, American Angus Association CEO. “Sending someone from our staff encourages them to bring back different perspectives and the newest ideas to continue providing our members with the most current information about the beef industry.”

From gate to plate

Denver was the first stop of many on this 10-day tour of beef across the country. It was at the NCBA headquarters participants were able to see firsthand what NCBA does on behalf of the entire industry.

A stop at the Safeway flagship store prior to leaving Colorado allowed participants to experience the retail aspect of the industry. It portrayed the techniques and marketing used to sell beef in a grocery store.

Chicago was next, making stops at McDonald's, Hillshire Farms and OSI Inc., the nation's premier beef patty manufacturer. OSI Inc. displayed their techniques for using beef in their products, as well as the processing that goes into getting meat to consumers' plates.

Dickinson had a great appreciation for the transparency these companies showed. When talking to JBS corporate, he says they were



Visiting D.C. are (front row, from left) Kelli Retallick; Katelyn Wilson; John Dickinson; Bradfield Evans; Jake Thames; (back row, from left) Cole Barber; Will Mayfield; George Stovall; and Andy Bishop.

“extremely candid about how the market affects them and what they need from us as producers.”

Retallick found Chicago to hold the most meaning. It was here she found the most diverse and new perspectives than any of the other stops in the trip.

“The sustainability branch of the McDonald's Corporation was impressive and eye-opening to the different ways they work to promote beef as a sustainable product that is good for the environment,” Retallick says. “It was a major realization to see how small each individual is in the major beef industry and how many different concerns and perspectives must be taken into account.”

Finishing in Washington D.C., the participants received an insider perspective of how legislation affects the daily lives of a cattle producer.

Briefings from the NCBA lobbyists and policy experts started out the D.C. leg, then each participant was encouraged to visit their respective congressional offices to advocate for the beef industry.

Dickinson found this portion of the trip to be the most influential and eye-opening. Each participant received a brief training of how to talk to the congressmen, and Dickinson was surprised by the genuine influence he could have with his representatives.

“I had never participated in anything similar to this before, and I had never been to D.C. I was skeptical a few cattlemen could make a difference,” Dickinson says. “However, the people I spoke to really listened and were appreciative of my perspective, and I have already received thank you letters from their offices.” **AJ**