

Ambition Leads Pickrell to CAB

BY CRYSTAL MEIER



Former National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) Board Chairman Melissa Pickrell joined CAB full-time in January.

It's a good thing for Chuck Grove that Melissa Pickrell found her niche in the Angus industry with Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB).

"I shadowed Chuck throughout my years as a junior member," Pickrell says, referring to the American Angus Association regional manager for Kentucky, Ohio and Tennessee. "I wanted his job so bad I could taste it!"

Pickrell, her family, friends and even Grove giggle about how forthright she was about her aspiration. More than anything, they're pleased her hard work has paid off and that she's using her background to influence the industry in both the cattle and beef arenas.

This fourth-generation cattle producer and recently retired chairman of the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) Board of Directors is one of two retail marketing managers for CAB. She assists retailers in implementing promotional and educational activities to further their sales and consumer interest in the

Certified Angus Beef™ (CAB®) brand and, ultimately, to energize demand for Angus cattle.

Joining the CAB team

She joined the organization full-time in January after completing a summer 1999 marketing internship.

"I am helping CAB link all segments of the industry by sharing my experiences with both the retail and production segments," she says. "Each is eager to learn more about the other."

Pickrell likens her role within CAB as "jumping the fence" into the beef arena, but she readily admits that a unified industry with shared knowledge from conception to consumption continues to shape the industry's future.

Association and junior members should snag opportunities to share with other industry segments, she says. By learning about other aspects of the beef industry and supporting CAB's efforts, the breed membership helps build demand for Angus cattle.

"I have shared my production experiences with other segments of the industry," she says. "It's exciting to see their interest in the progress of NJAA."

Leadership fundamentals


Pickrell says her leadership roles with NJAA, 4-H, other groups and at Western Kentucky University, where she received an animal science degree in December 1999 with a minor in communication, helped her foster relationships within her community and the industry. They also developed her organizational and listening skills, which is necessary to guide fellow junior members and, in her new role, CAB licensees.

"Melissa is one of many leaders who is steering the cattle and beef industry to meet consumers' needs for flavor and convenience," says Rebecca Thomas, director of marketing services. "Her strong ties to the Angus breed contribute to her success at CAB."

Pickrell credits her family for driving her motivation to thrive as a junior member and beyond. Her one sibling, sister Mandy, has been her partner on

every heifer and breeding decision.

"I never had a good day in the showring without Mandy having one, too. We share everything," she explains. They've kept in close contact, even though Mandy attends Eastern Kentucky University at the opposite end of the state. Pickrell's parents, Ed and Kay, introduced her to Angus showmanship and the learning experiences that come with winning and losing. She says her father challenged her to see all sides of every situation — to be more open-minded. Her mother has been her strongest supporter, encouraging her never to quit.

"Having cattle in my life has helped me get this far, and I depend on those experiences daily," Pickrell says of her plans to continue raising Angus cattle and to be involved in the Association. "Showing and working Angus cattle has become a family tradition that has trickled down through four generations, and I certainly expect to continue that tradition." 

Editor's note: *Crystal Meier is publications manager for CAB.*



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