

It takes a specialist to master all that goes into assessing and procuring quality cattle. Feedlots need people who are dedicated to that task. For Irsik & Doll Feedyard, Garden City, Kan., Chuck Freeman is the right man for the job.

Freeman earned the Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) Quality Assurance Officer of the Year Award for 2001. That's based on attention to detail, cooperative and timely identification and enrollment of eligible cattle, and accurate tracking of cattle through harvest. Now he and a guest can enjoy the prize — a trip to the National Finals Rodeo (NFR) in Las Vegas, Nev.

Originally from northwest Missouri, Freeman has been with the Garden City yard for 15 years. He's been with Irsik & Doll since 1994 when the Cimarron, Kan., company acquired the facility and invited him to stay on.

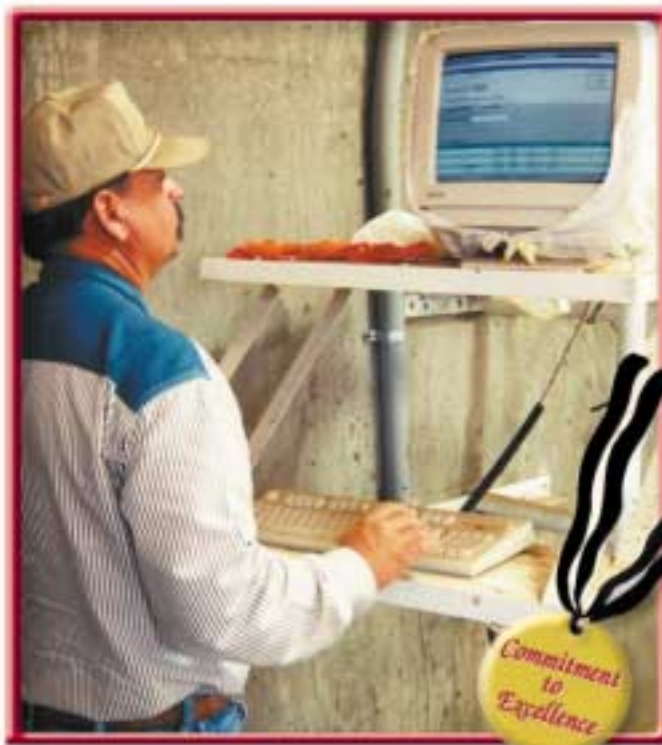
After becoming a partner in the CAB Feedlot Licensing Program (FLP) in 1999, the 25,000-head-capacity facility built a new processing barn to weigh and to sort cattle more efficiently. Cattle can be sorted seven ways right from the chute, as computers keep track of individual weights, average daily gains (ADGs), implants and vaccine records.

Freeman says the ability and willingness to sort — he calls it “aggressive sorting” — sets his team apart from others. “We might sort up to three or four times to get a group harvested at the optimum time,” he says.

Honesty, integrity, commitment

Pointing to a pen once full but still occupied by high-quality Angus cattle, Freeman says the first sort of their heifer mates was harvested at 90% Choice, with 54% qualifying for the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand.

Ron Kramer, Irsik & Doll customer service director, says that, if the cattle have the genetics in them, Freeman can get the performance from them.



2001 CAB QUALITY ASSURANCE OFFICER OF THE YEAR

The Right Man for the Job

CAB rewards a Kansas feedlot employee for his attention to detail and commitment to customer service.

by *Chris Lavergne*



►Top: Chuck Freeman, Irsik & Doll Feedyard, Garden City, Kan., earned the 2001 Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) Quality Assurance Officer of the Year Award. He says the ability and willingness to aggressively sort cattle sets his team apart from others.

►Bottom: After becoming a Partner in the CAB Feedlot Licensing Program (FLP) in 1999, the 25,000-head-capacity facility built a new processing barn to weigh and to sort cattle more efficiently.

He would pit the star CAB quality assurance (QA) specialist against anyone in the country with confidence that Freeman would out-sort them.

“Irsik & Doll was founded on honesty, integrity and a commitment to customer service,” Kramer says. “Chuck depicts all of those in the way he does his job daily.”

A commitment to quality and a willingness to embrace new technologies helps Irsik & Doll maintain a large customer base, Kramer says. Electronic identification (EID) software soon will be installed to enhance their cost-effective operation.

Error-free ID for automated recordkeeping will reduce the time it takes to read producer ear tags, Freeman says. Hospital operations will be a breeze when each animal's treatment regimens and past disease diagnoses can be accessed on a computer.

By the numbers

While the transition to a CAB-licensed feedlot is still a learning process, Freeman acknowledges the benefits of striving for a quality product. He explains how working under CAB QA guidelines serves the customer's best interests.

“Working with CAB helps us keep our numbers straight,” Freeman says. “We have a CAB tag number and the original producer tag. It helps us keep track of the data on the front end.”

Freeman also notes producers can take the individual carcass information and use it to make genetic decisions. He likes grids that show which cattle made the biggest return because they help identify the cows that bring him the best genetics.

“We will do what it takes to make our customers the most money,” Freeman adds. “Whether it takes sorting three or four times [to a grid] or identifying the cattle and getting them into a cash market, that's what we will do.”

