



# Setting the PACE

► by *Susan Rhode*, director of communications and public relations

## AgriTalk broadcast brings Angus issues to the forefront

*Having just returned from the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Denver, Colo., it's easy to be excited about the future of the Angus business. The Angus breed has some of the top youth in agriculture, and the week showcased the best of the best. Thanks to all of the exhibitors, parents, grandparents and Angus breeders who supported the show by attending or contributing financially. It's one of the best investments you'll ever make.*

*The NJAS was the scene for a live broadcast of AgriTalk, a nationally syndicated radio talk show that focuses on the issues and people in agriculture. Host Ken Root spent the hour talking with Sonya Smith, Lebanon, Tenn., and Ryan Sweeney, Mason, Mich., both members of the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) Board of Directors. Other juniors also joined the broadcast, as well as parents, breeders and American Angus Association staff.*

*I never hesitate to put our kids live on the air with a farm broadcaster, in the hands of a reporter or before a television camera because I know they'll always make us proud. The broadcast was a great opportunity to showcase Angus youth to thousands of listeners across the country.*

### Tough call

In true talk-radio fashion, callers are welcome to join the discussion on *AgriTalk*. Toward the end of the hour, we received a call from a man named Ben in Oklahoma who had a complaint about some *Certified*

*Angus Beef*® (CAB®) product he recently purchased.

Ben was mad. In fact, I think his exact quote was "I wouldn't have fed that piece of meat to my dog." We all know dog is man's best friend, but that piece of meat had to be

pretty tough to make that kind of an impression on Ben. One bad eating experience turned him against CAB, and he vowed never to invest his hard-earned consumer dollars in the product again.

However, we never got a clear answer from Ben during the broadcast and still don't know if the product he had purchased actually was CAB. We'll never know.

### Hard-earned reputation

Today, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recognizes more than 30 branded beef programs that have the word *Angus* in their name. These programs span a wide range of live and carcass specifications, with quality grades varying from Prime to Utility.

There's no question that if a consumer were to purchase one of those branded products not having the high quality standards consumers get when they purchase CAB, they could be less than pleased with their eating experience. In fact, I almost would guarantee you that they would.

The staff at the Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) headquarters in Wooster, Ohio, make it a daily priority to educate distributors, restaurateurs and retailers about the difference between CAB products and the "me too" Angus brands. The Brand Assurance Division serves as the "logo police" to enforce not only the correct usage of the brand with licensees, but also to "bust" those who try to pass off another Angus branded product as CAB.

We've invested the last 25 years in building a reputation with consumers that CAB means quality — every time. Other Angus brands that don't use high quality specifications in selecting product for their program put the hard-earned CAB reputation on the line every day.

### Important mission

The bad thing is, most consumers don't know the difference and aren't willing to learn. Buying decisions at the meat and deli counters are made in a matter of seconds. Consumers don't take the time to think that all Angus products may not be created equal. It's your job to tell them.

The next time you hear someone say they bought a CAB steak and it wasn't up to their



PHOTOS BY LANCE ZIESCH

► Whitney Trosper, Hamilton, Mo., who walked into the showing as a junior for the last time the day before the broadcast, tells Ken Root about the emotions of her final junior Angus experience and her favorite memories from her 15-year junior career.

expectations, start asking questions. Where did they buy the steak? Are they *sure* the logo said *Certified Angus Beef*? Did the store or restaurant use the logo, not just the words, and did it identify itself as a CAB licensee? If these questions can't be answered, there's a good chance it wasn't CAB product.

With more and more branded beef products flooding the market every day, and more and more of them tying their identity to the Angus breed, protecting the CAB brand becomes a more difficult task and a more important mission for our breed. We need your help in that effort.

Before they head out the door, encourage consumers to check the Flavor Finder at [www.2eatcab.com](http://www.2eatcab.com) to be sure the store is a licensed retail or foodservice account. They also can locate licensees by calling the toll-free flavor line at 1-877-2-EAT-C-A-B. If it's after the fact, get the person's name and phone number, and do some research.

CAB staff are always willing to help you get to the bottom of a bad eating experience, which usually ends up being a trademark-compliance issue on the part of a licensee or even sometimes a more serious trademark-infringement case.

But most importantly, be sure to follow up with the consumer. They will appreciate your persistence in assuring their customer satisfaction and your willingness to stand behind the CAB brand. Always remember that, as a producer of Angus genetics, every piece of Angus beef has your brand name on it.

### Team effort

A big thanks to everyone who participated in the *AgriTalk* broadcast in Denver. It was an honor to work with Ken during his final days on the show. For years he has served as a catalyst in bringing issues in agriculture to the forefront and giving grassroots producers the opportunity to speak their minds. My congratulations and thanks to him for a lifelong effort that truly has made a difference in our industry.

It takes a team effort to spread the good news about Angus far and wide. Every day that team grows, learns and becomes more involved in the issues that affect our success in the Angus business. I'm glad you're part of our team that helps us set the PACE!

*Susan Rhode*

e-mail: [srhode@angus.org](mailto:srhode@angus.org)



► Host Ken Root visits with 11-year-old Parker Rayl, Hutchinson, Kan., during the live broadcast of *AgriTalk* at the NJAS. More than 70,000 listeners from 140 affiliate stations across the country heard the broadcast, which featured junior Angus programs and the positive effect they have on youth in agriculture.



► NJAA Board members Ryan Sweeney (left), Mason, Mich., and Sonya Smith (center), Lebanon, Tenn., offer perspectives on their careers as Angus juniors and their plans for the future to Ken Root during the *AgriTalk* broadcast at the NJAS.

### The Last WORD ...

Some people give time, some money, some their skills and connections, some literally give their life's blood ... but everyone has something to give.

— **Barbara Bush**