

Speaking Up

Juniors compete nationally in extemporaneous and prepared public speaking contests.

Photos by *Corinne Blender*

National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members put their knowledge of Angus cattle and the beef industry to use in the 2002 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) Public Speaking Contest in Milwaukee, Wis. Juniors in three age divisions: 9 to 13, 14 to 17 and 18 to 21 years, gave extemporaneous and prepared speeches Wednesday and Thursday.

See the NJAS 2002 Award Winners on page 292 for a listing of all division winners. A full text version of the first-place speeches in each division of the prepared public speaking contest follows.

►After selecting their topic, juniors had 30 minutes to prepare their extemporaneous speeches. A panel of three judges determined the winners.



►Juniors draw three topics from a pool of 10 and then choose one on which to give their extemporaneous speeches. Topics ranged from Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) to how the beef industry plays a role in their lives.

Invest in Beef

by **Mary Connolly**, Rogers, Ark.

Did any of you happen to see an article in the Dec. 24, 2001, issue of *Fortune Magazine* that featured an awesome cow made out of mirrors?

The cow was sponsored — \$10,000 sponsored by Enron — to be part of the 2001 Cow Parade in Houston.

After the parade, the cow was exhibited in front of Enron's headquarters for a short while. Don't you bet more than just a few Enron employees, vendors and investors wished they hadn't ignored what is now the obvious? An investment in one of the longest standing industries of our nation would have paid off more handsomely! ... Are you with me here? Yes, I am talking about *beef!*

If *you* are looking for a sound investment in today's unstable investment climate, then I have a tip for you today on a high-performing industry that provides economic stimulus with a quality product and a diverse line of side products, and this industry actually enhances the environment. Take my advice today — *invest in beef!*

Instead of just taking my advice, let's take a look at what lies inside of the beef industry's portfolio and examine the economics of the

industry, the high-quality products that the industry produces and how this industry sustains the environment.

Let's start by looking at the economics of the industry. More than 1 million cattlemen and women do business in a free-market economy. They represent the largest segment of American agriculture, and have for over 200 years. Furthermore, confidence is currently high as consumers rank the beef industry ahead of producers of other meats, and ahead of industries like autos, banking and chemicals.

Beef production employs 186,000 people in direct jobs and 1 million more in related jobs. In addition, the beef industry generates \$30 billion in direct business activity and \$90 billion indirectly each year. Isn't it great to see the beef industry, once again, receiving the attention it deserves?

The beef industry has been in business for over 200 years because of the yield of high-quality products. First and foremost, the beef industry produces nutritious and delicious meat. A 3-ounce serving of beef contributes more than 10% of the recommended daily allowances for protein, iron, zinc, niacin and vitamins B₆ and B₁₂. Today's beef has made a sustainable rebound, being slimmer and trimmer than just a few years ago.

The beef industry also targets big profits with a sideline of byproducts. Byproducts serve as source material for hundreds of other products such as crayons, deodorant, shoes, purses, film, detergent, car wax, lubricants, textiles and, most importantly, life-saving medications such as bone marrow, heparin, epinephrine and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 198



► Courtenay DeHoff, Tonganoxie, Kan., won the junior division of extemporaneous public speaking. Each speech must be between two and six minutes in length, not including three minutes allowed for questions.



► John Pfeiffer, Mulhall, Okla., gives his prepared speech to a panel of three judges. Pfeiffer won second in the intermediate division. Topics in the intermediate division could be related to Angus cattle or to any facet of the beef business.



► Wravenna Phipps, Kearney, Neb., says beef is a guaranteed way "to help improve your health and help you solve part of life's puzzle." Phipps won the intermediate division of the public speaking contest at the 2002 National Junior Angus Show in Milwaukee, Wis.

insulin. The beef industry continues to gain more sales and market share with a nutritious meat product and an assorted line of side products.

Cattlemen are actively working to protect and improve the environment because they know good environmental stewardship means good business. Cattlemen use 800 million acres of land that is too high, too rough, too wet or too dry to grow cultivated crops. Cattlemen employ conservation practices such as soil testing, rotational grazing, water management systems and planting trees to conserve and improve natural resources. American rangelands are in

better condition today than at the turn of the century because of a commitment to sound stewardship. The cattleman knows the importance of protecting the land for future generations, as well as for his own economic well-being.

I think by now you will agree that the beef industry's portfolio is quite impressive. This quiet but solid progressing industry is good for the economy, produces a high-quality product and a diverse line of side products while at the same time sustaining the environment. Now is the time to take my advice and "turn a cow chip into a blue chip."

Intermediate Division

Beef Is the Answer

by **Wravenna Phipps**, Kearney, Neb.

All over the world people are searching for answers. They are trying to put the pieces together in the puzzle of life. Some folks are waiting for Ed McMahon and his prize patrol to hand them the \$10 million sweepstake check, while others are waiting to be selected for the popular game show, "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?"

Lottery tickets, fad diets and sudden wealth all promise to give us answers to improve our lives. However, they usually cause disappointment and heartache instead. Even though I don't have all the answers, I have found something that is guaranteed to help improve your health and help you solve part of life's puzzle. Eat beef!

Let me share with you what I have found as we review the nutritional value of beef, food safety and beef convenience products. I am certain after reviewing these three areas that you folks will agree with me that, piece by piece, beef is the answer.

The first area we need to address is the nutritional benefits of beef. Nutritional awareness is now a part of our everyday lives, but so are misperceptions. In fact, misperceptions about beef have made many consumers feel guilty about eating beef and have caused others to eliminate it from their diets. Ladies and gentlemen, despite what you may have heard in the past, today I am here to lay the cards on the table and let the facts on beef speak for themselves.

According to the American Dietetic Association, beef is the No. 1 source of protein, iron, vitamin B₁₂ and zinc. Beef provides each one of us with the vital nutrients we need to meet the demands of our everyday lives. More than 40% of Americans are not getting enough iron in their daily diets, and 73% are not getting enough zinc. This can severely impact someone's mental and physical growth and performance. By simply including two servings of lean beef in our daily diets, we can eliminate this crisis. Beef is also one of the best

sources of absorbable iron because it contains heme iron, unlike fruits, grains and vegetables.

Although beef is often linked with increasing risks for certain cancers, research has proven over and over that statement to be highly inaccurate. In fact, medical studies have proven that moderate amounts of lean beef can actually help lower blood cholesterol levels. The facts speak for themselves — beef is the answer.

The second area that we need to understand is food safety with beef. No one cares more about the safety of U.S. beef than America's 1 million cattle producers do. American beef is recognized as the safest beef in the world. The U.S. government, through the USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS), strictly monitors the processing of U.S. beef and beef products.

Even though beef is America's favorite meat, it does attract its share of media scrutiny. We need to take a tip from Paul Harvey and hear the rest of the story. Illnesses associated with beef are primarily the result of improper handling and food preparation and not from the meat itself. It's very important to realize that the bacteria on the meat's surface are completely destroyed by adequate cooking. Because bacteria transfer from the surface to the interior, ground beef should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160° F.

The two most widely recognized pathogenic bacteria associated with beef are *E. coli* and *salmonella*. All American processing plants are required by law to test all carcasses for both bacteria types. USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) tests have shown both of these bacteria to be quite rare in beef, about one-tenth of 1%. When it comes to food safety, beef is the answer.

The third and final area to address is the convenience of beef. Things have changed dramatically during the past several years. With more and more women working out of the home, meal preparation has had to adjust. Beef is now convenient, versatile and very easy to prepare.

While steaks and ground beef are always excellent choices when pressed for time, now consumers have other beef options for their meal preparations. Prepared beef products are the perfect answer for busy folks who desire to have home-cooked beef on their dinner table. These new beef products are fully prepared, fully cooked and can be prepared in only 7 to 10 minutes in the microwave. They are real time-savers and provide variety, too — everything from pot roast to meatballs.

If you are watching your checkbook, you will be pleased to know that the prepared beef products are only 30% to 40% higher in price than fresh beef. They can be found in most grocery stores, located in

the meatcase area. Since nearly 80% of all consumers spend 45 minutes or less time preparing a meal, it seems obvious that beef is the answer.

Reflecting back, we realize that all over the world people are searching for answers. They are trying to solve the puzzle of life. Game shows, Powerball drawings and fad diets are all examples of ways people are trying to improve their lives. However, many people are unaware that the first and most important step they need to make is to improve their health.

After reviewing the nutritional value of beef, food safety, along with how convenient beef can be, it is quite obvious that we all need beef in our daily diets. It's time for each one of us to stand up and speak out the facts on beef, because piece by piece . . . beef is the answer!

Senior Division

Is Coming Back to Production Agriculture a Pipe Dream?

by Jesse Faber, Sublette, Ill.

It was a Monday morning in May, and I happened to be home, for a change. I started with my chores, then hopped in the tractor to finish drilling a field of beans. After that it was late morning and, with my family, I worked 65 cows through the chute. Then I spent the rest of the afternoon into the evening sitting in a tractor, working down ground. I was happy!

You must understand that I have had the opportunity to experience the worlds of business, sales, teaching and even politics over this past year. With all that, there is no air-conditioned office or boardroom that I would rather be in, in place of that tractor cab or cattle barn. That day, working at home was fantastic, and there was no place I would have rather been.

As I finished that day, though, I realized that the dream of spending my life after college solely working on the family farm is still just that, a dream. I believe that our home place is simply not large enough to support me, a possible family down the line, as well as my parents.

To strike off on my own I would be facing all those challenges that so many people face when trying to start in production agriculture. One of the biggest ones is finances and capital. Then, even if you can find a way to take care of initial costs, the market prices are so unstable. How does one stay in business? Then there is also the challenge of staying educated on the world of agriculture. How can somebody make it work?

Now, still, one of my favorite things to do has always been listening to my grandpas or great uncles tell me those stories of: "Back in my day . . ." or "When I was your age . . ." They tell of a time when someone could produce more than enough to raise and support a family on 80 acres of tillable land, with a few cows, chickens and pigs. A time when it was expected of the children to come back and take over the farm. It was a time when it was easier to get into farming, from a standpoint that start-up costs weren't so large.

Nowadays, in my part of the country, mediocre tillable ground is very reasonable at \$3,500 per acre. If you want to raise livestock, pasture sells from \$600-\$900 per acre. That's just land. Then there's the cost of tractors, combines, trucks, trailers, buildings, equipment,

etc. It is also a commonly known fact that college students don't have lots of money, so how does one pay these start-up costs? Especially, with \$2 corn, \$4.50 beans, and 69¢ cattle for market prices.

Then there is the intangible — knowledge. I'm a firm believer that, once started, people can make it off good management. Good management, however, requires staying up-to-date on the ever-changing world of agriculture. This could be added-value opportunities like CAB® (*Certified Angus Beef*®), CHB® (*Certified Hereford Beef*®), and *American Berkshire Gold*™, just to name a few. It could also mean new products, new management styles and even staying aware of changes in your specific areas, like which Angus bulls are leading the pack. But taking the time to stay educated takes away from productive time on the farm.

The challenges just keep adding up.

I love agriculture with every bit of my heart. I have grown up on the same farm my father did and consider that valuable in itself. I don't know what all the answers are, but there are ways to make it. Agriculture is an industry that will never die simply from the fact that it is the lifeline of the world.

Investors from outside sources into production agriculture have made it a challenge for those small-farm entrepreneurs whose families have been farming for generations. It has created an imbalance that has seen production costs soar, while market prices have remained stagnant to lower.

But even with that, those smaller, family operations can live. Cooperatives, whether at a large level or even something like buying a combine with a neighbor, can be effective. Also, starting more as an apprentice and building an operation or herd before breaking off on your own can provide the boost you might need. Then, there are those who will make it in the industry simply by being resourceful and using their heads.

I want to be one of those who make it, and I hope that I can meet and beat those challenges of starting in production agriculture — so that I can live *my* dream.

