



Inspiring Young Cattlemen

11th annual Beef Leaders Institute and tour provides Angus members insight on all aspects of beef production chain.

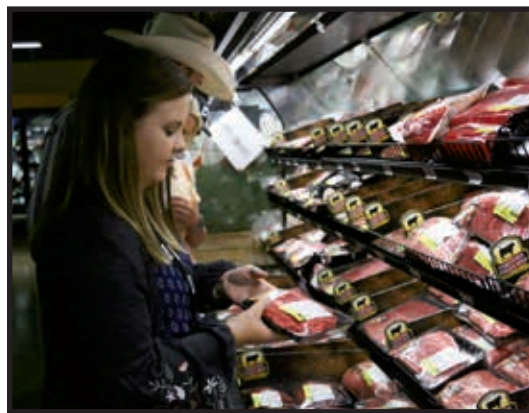
by Katy Holdener, Angus Communications

Nearly 25 American Angus Association members traveled from multiple states for an in-depth cattle industry tour through the Beef Leaders Institute (BLI). Hosted by the American Angus Association and sponsored by Certified Angus Beef® (CAB®) and the Angus Foundation, BLI is a complete pasture-to-plate experience for young leaders in the Angus industry. The tour takes participants on a five-day expedition to study quality genetics, genomic technology, feedyard management, packing plants, foodservice and retail distribution of CAB and more.

The yearly event was hosted June 18-23 and began at the Association headquarters in Saint Joseph, Mo. Participants were given a look at the inner workings of the Association by staff members and representatives.

“BLI is an educational

partnership between the Angus Foundation and the Certified Angus Beef brand,” says Kara Lee, production brand manager for CAB. “Ultimately, it’s targeted toward young Angus breeders who are interested in expanding their knowledge base, building their leadership skills and just getting a better appreciation for



BLI participants started in St. Joseph, Mo., at the Association headquarters and made their way across the Midwest, ending in Wooster, Ohio.

the entire production system. We cover everything from the tools the American Angus Association offers all the way to how consumers utilize the Certified Angus Beef brand.”

Learning the beef business

The goal is to provide young producers between the ages of 25 and 45 the opportunity to network with their peers in the Angus breed, and they learn about Association programs, sectors of the beef business after cattle leave the ranch and how cattle qualify for CAB. Participants were selected through an application process and are exceptional leaders who represent the Angus breed and cattle industry.

“While visiting the CAB headquarters, we gave participants the opportunity to look at a carcass and explore the 10 carcass specifications that make up the Certified Angus Beef

brand quality standards,” says Diana Clark, meat scientist for CAB. “We wanted to show the producer group the added value they can receive when their cattle meet the CAB specifications. We were also able to break down a side of beef to look at where the specific value comes from in each primal, which I think was really eye-opening for them.”

This year marked the 11th annual BLI. Throughout the week, participants visited GeneSeek Neogen Operations in Lincoln, Neb.; Weborg Feeding Co., in Pender, Neb.; Trans Ova in Sioux City, Iowa; the Tyson Fresh Meats processing facility in Dakota City, Iowa.; Sysco in Cleveland, Ohio; and a retail store at Giant Eagle’s Market District Supermarket in Cleveland, Ohio, concluding at the CAB headquarters in Wooster, Ohio.

Off-farm experience

Participants experienced all sectors of the beef business, from start to finish. Through interaction with



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industry experts, they cultivated a vision to improve their own operations and the entire industry.

“I wanted to attend the Beef Leaders Institute because we talk to so many people at the Association every day,” says Kathleen Evans, producer from Hope Hull, Ala. “I wanted to meet the people I talk to and see how things work at the Association on a day-to-day basis. Having the opportunity to travel to the different stops and experience

all facets of the industry while networking with fellow participants was really exciting.”

While it may not always be easy to leave the farm for five days, the opportunity to learn about what goes on off the ranch builds a new mindset and reinstates a passion for the Angus breed in those who attend.

“Through this experience, I’ve learned there is a lot out there I still need to learn,” says Zane Troxtel, producer from Geraldine, Ala. “I’ve really liked hearing from everyone and how they do things in other parts of the country. One of the reasons I wanted to come to this event was to see not only what the Association is doing, but what other cattlemen in other operations are doing as well. The people have really made this trip memorable for me.” 

Editor’s note: For more information on how to participate in the leadership event, visit www.angus.org. Applications for the 2019 class will be available online this fall.

Beef Leaders Institute — Class of 2018



Participating in the 2018 Beef Leaders Institute were Vawnita Best, Watford City, N.D.; Scott Cherne, Guttenberg, Iowa; David De Spain, Joseph City, Ariz.; Kathleen Evans, Hope Hull, Ala.; Troy Gabriel, Midland, S.D.; Jeff Gatrel, Cowgill, Mo.; Katie Kaliff-Jagels, Davenport, Neb.; Tierra Kessler, Milton-Freewater, Ore.; George Kite, North Chesterfield, Va.; Zac Longanecker, Lithia, Fla.; Odessa Mathias, Lusk, Wyo.; Jacob Moore, Scio, Ohio; Robert Rice, Terrel, Texas; Jeff Ruggles, McCook, Neb.; Tim Skinner, Hall, Mont.; Ezra Swope, New Enterprise, Pa.; Natalie Tokach, Mandan, N.D.; Hannah Tolbert, Harrodsburg, Ky.; Zane Troxtel, Geraldine, Ala.; Ethan Ulmanis, Koshkonong, Mo.; and Drake Yon, Ridge Spring, S.C.