



## Kiana Lodge Meets National Beef Cook-Off

Kiana Lodge is one of the most beautiful places you'll ever see. Located on Kitsap Peninsula in Puget Sound just across from Seattle, it is all flowers, fir trees and rocky beaches wrapped around an elegant two-story log lodge. The lodge itself dates from the 1920s and is decorated in Indian wood sculptures and moose heads. It exudes an old-fashioned feeling of wealth and well-being that washes over the whole place.

For years now, the lodge has been a convention and meeting center, but in its time it has been host to millionaires and kings, the site of submarine traps and Navy maneuvers, and the setting for movies and marriages. According to lodge owner Bob Riebe, "We have seen it all here."

Not quite. On Sept. 21 the lodge will see something that it has never seen before: 20 to 25 trimmed and manicured animals parading around in a small-scale purebred cattle show.

Kiana Lodge, meet the 1990 National Beef Cook-Off.

The cattle show at Kiana Lodge is just part of the three-day National Beef Cook-Off. Each year, the Cook-Off— which is sponsored by the American National CattleWomen Inc., in cooperation with the Beef Industry Council and the Beef Board— offers amateur chefs from all 50 states a chance to win big money for their beef recipes. This year, the Cook-Off will be held Sept. 20-22 in Bellevue, Wash., with a \$15,000 prize for the top recipe.

Besides giving some cooks a chance to win fame and fortune, the contest also gives the beef industry a chance to tell consumers beef is a nutritious food that can be prepared in more ways than people imagine. As many as 100 food editors from magazines and newspapers will be at the Cook-Off to learn beef

recipes from the contestants and to report on the event to their readers.

"To me, the Cook-Off is the best tool the beef industry has for getting its message to the consumer," says Barbara Elkington of Ellensburg, Wash, who is chairman of this year's Cook-Off. Her co-chairman is Barbara Weber, also of Ellensburg.

"I first got involved with the American National CattleWomen during the beef boycott of the 1970s," Elkington says. "It seemed so unfair to me that the public was only hearing one side of what the beef industry is all about."

When she got involved in the CattleWomen, she got involved in a big way. Besides running a purebred Angus operation with her husband, Earl, she served one term as president of the state organization and was the Washington Beef Cook-Off chairman for five consecutive years. To learn more about how the national contest operates, she attended seven national finals in seven states beginning in 1983.

"One year, the Cook-Off sponsored a cattle auction so the contestants and guests could get the feeling for how cattle are sold," she remembers. "Another year, we had a barbecue and rodeo. Again, the idea was to give a flavor for what the beef industry was all about. But when we got to talking about something similar in the Seattle area, we had a hard time trying to figure out how to get people to the cattle without putting everyone on buses for several hours. So we decided that instead of bringing people to the cattle, we'd bring cattle to the people."

The idea of holding a cattle show on his beautiful grounds didn't phase Bob Riebe.



Chairman, Barbara Elkington, (right) and co-chairman, Barbara Weber, (left) of rural Ellensburg, Wash., oversee some 23 committees and 500 volunteers to organize the 1990 National Beef Cook-Off, Sept. 20-22 in Bellevue, Wash.



Wall Westergard won't have far to bring his animals for the show. His purebred Angus operation in Chimum, Wash., is only about an hour from Kiana Lodge.

"You name it, we've done it here," he says. He counts King Hussein of Jordan and most of the heads of the Fortune 500 companies among his guests at Kiana Lodge. "Ted Turner is supposed to be here this summer, but I don't know if Jane (Fonda) is coming with him or not."

The lodge was built before the Depression as a country club to serve the well-to-do of Seattle. But during World War II, the Navy commandeered it for use as a base to guard the submarine nets that spread across Puget Sound, keeping the Japanese away from American shipyards. After the war, the lodge reverted to private property as a meeting lodge.

"Weddings are one of our main businesses these days," Riebe says. "After the ceremonies, we've had couples take off for their honeymoons in kayaks, airplanes and even hot air balloons."

If those wedding exits weren't enough to convince Riebe that the bizarre is commonplace at Kiana Lodge, last year the film crew of the stranger-than-life television series, "Twin Peaks," showed up at the lodge. "See that big log on the beach? That's where they found Laura's body," Riebe says with a proud smile. "I had a bit-part myself. Appropriately enough, I played an innkeeper. I had three lines, and I flubbed them horribly."

At about the same time that Riebe worried about memorizing his lines, the two Barbaras worried about finding a place big enough to hold the 800 to 900 people expected for the National Beef Cook-Off.

"Last year at the Cook-Off in Oregon, they thought they would have about 400 people. Instead, they wound up with close to 1,000," says Barbara Weber, who along with husband, Don, runs a cow-calf operation. "There has been an explosion of interest in the Cook-Off recently."

The two Barbaras — who began planning the 1990 Cook-Off five years ago — finally found a hotel in the Seattle suburb of Bellevue that could accommodate most of the Cook-Off events.

Some 23 committees and 500 volunteers will help the Barbaras work out every detail of the Cook-Off — from how to wire the place for 25 electric ranges to where to buy the best garlic for recipes. The garlic, as well as the beef, was found at the Quality Food Centers — the official grocery store for the 1990 National Beef Cook-Off.

Details of the "Parade of Champions" cattle show were left to Barbara Elkington's husband, Earl. "He has it all under control," she says.

"Sure I do," Earl says with just the right mixture of real and mock nervousness.

Originally, the plan was to have the cattle show on the lodge's main lawn which sweeps majestically from the log buildings to the beach. But Earl became concerned about what would happen if one of the bulls ran amuck among the flowers that line the lawn, and he shifted the site to the lodge's parking lot. He diagrammed the whole area and, with the help of some volunteers familiar with putting on cattle shows, plotted exactly where each fence and grandstand viewing area will be.

Some of the cattle will arrive by ferry a day or two before the event and will be penned at a staging area five miles from the site. Their early arrival will give the animals a chance to settle down after their trip and regain their form. Other animals

will arrive the day of the show and leave immediately afterward.

Four breeds will be represented: Angus, Hereford, Shorthorn and Simmental. "We just didn't have room for more," Earl says.

A commentator will describe to the audience — who will arrive at the lodge aboard three chartered boats — what judges look for in purebreds. He also will talk about each animal as it parades through the ring. Later, the 64 Cook-Off contestants will be asked to judge two classes of animals.

"We hope people will learn something from this," Barbara Elkington says. "But we also hope to have one or two big old bulls that will just knock the socks off everyone there."

Bill Bennett, a Hereford breeder from Connell, Wash., will bring five bulls and a cow-calf pair to the show. That will mean five hours of truck and trailer driving — some of it through busy downtown Seattle — plus an hour on the ferry. But Bennett is unintimidated.

"Back in 1948 when I was just a kid, two of us got into a train boxcar to take some cattle to a show in Chicago. It was winter time, and we went through Portland, San Francisco and Ogden, Utah, before we got to Chicago. I almost froze to death," Bennett says. "But I have been pounding the pavement and showing cattle ever since."

Bennett, who sells live cattle, embryo transfers and semen all over the world, says he is taking cattle to the Cook-Off because, "We want the public to see the best we've got. It's important for the whole industry."

Wally Westergaard won't have to bring his animals as far as Bennett. His purebred Angus operation in Chimacum, Wash., is only about an hour from Kiana Lodge.

"Normally, our show season would be over by the middle of September," Westergaard says, "But we'll keep a few animals groomed for the Cook-Off."

Daughter Ellen Anglin explains why: "We thought it was an honor to be asked to show at the Cook-Off. The people there won't be familiar with good animals, but we want to show them the best we have. It's important the public knows more about the beef industry."

