

# NJAA Members Speak Up

*Results from the National Junior Angus Show  
public speaking and extemporaneous speaking contests.*



## *Certified Angus Beef: A Cut Above* by Garrett Lampe, Scott City, Kan.

*Certified Angus Beef*— what does that phrase bring to mind?

Is it a pen of black steers in a western Kansas feedlot? Or a thick, tender steak? Or maybe you are not familiar with the term.

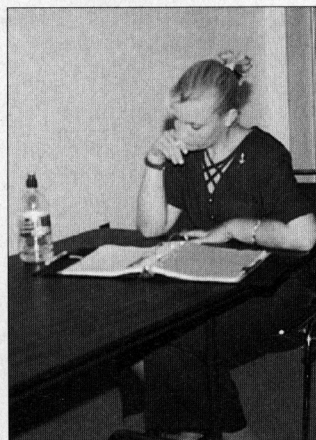
Well, I'm here to change that and convince you that *Certified Angus Beef*™ product or the Certified Angus Beef (CAB) Program is "A CUT ABOVE."

Let's start at the beginning, from the earliest existence of the Angus breed, going back to Aberdeen, Scotland, Angus meant beef. According to the breed's history, its popularity grew and prospered among the hearty beef eaters in England and Scotland because of its fine marbling characteristic. When Angus cattle were introduced in America in the late 1800s, the black, polled cattle made the beef industry take notice on the range, plate and show ring.

Although the beef industry has its ups and downs, one thing is always true among beef eaters, they want a tender, juicy, flavorful product.

The CAB Program was introduced by the American Angus Association in 1978 as a response to the United State

Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) lowering of the standard for Choice and Prime beef grades. This led to a great variation in beef quality and taste. Consumers who wanted the finest beef available, were not satisfied. Because of the wider grading standard, the Prime and



**Jessica Sawyer, Bassett, Neb., prepares for her extemporaneous speech. Junior members had 30 minutes to prepare their speech.**

Choice beef product is very inconsistent. This is where the CAB Program steps in.

The quality standards set by the CAB Program are so high that only about 18 percent of

Angus-type cattle meet them. Cattle must first go through a visual "on-hoof" inspection and meet these requirements at a licensed packing plant:

1. Cattle must be at least 51 percent black;
2. They must be Angus-type cattle; and
3. Qualifying cattle must be steers or heifers.

After this visual inspection they are given an "A" stamp to be eligible for *Certified Angus Beef* carcass evaluation. A USDA grader then evaluates the carcasses for the CAB Program's carcass specifications.

Carcasses must meet all eight specifications to be certified.

The carcass specifications that must be met and the reasons why are:

- Must have a modest or higher degree of marbling, because proper marbling is essential to beef flavor and juiciness.
- Must have medium or fine marbling texture, since coarse marbling has a negative effect on quality.

- Carcasses must be "A" maturity or nine to 30 months of age. Young cattle tend to produce superior color, texture and tenderness.
- To ensure a product with no excess fat cover, carcasses must be Yield Grade 3.9 or leaner.
- Have thick or moderate muscling, this indicates a higher proportion of muscle to bone.
- Carcasses can not have a hump on the neck exceeding 2 inches. This eliminates cattle with high Brahman influence.
- Have no internal hemorrhages.
- And have no dark cutting characteristics, dark-colored meat is not acceptable by consumers or the CAB Program.

Meeting these visual and carcass specifications ensures that the *Certified Angus Beef* product is "A CUT ABOVE" in quality and taste.

The success and growth of the CAB Program in its 19 years of existence has been phenomenal. The demand for the product continually increases. In 1996 more than 250 million pounds of *Certified Angus Beef* product was sold. The major contributor to its success is a consistent, quality product.

There are 18 licensed packing plants. Licensed retail outlets are in 49 states, in 1996 more than 500 restaurants were licensed, bringing the total to more than 1,600. The number of distributors is constantly increasing, *Certified Angus Beef* product is shipped to many international destinations. The retail stores, restaurants and distributors that are licensed to carry the *Certified Angus Beef* product have been convinced by its quality and consistency that *Certified Angus Beef* is "A CUT ABOVE."

In addition to the retail cuts of beef, the introduction and sales of value-added products has risen. *Certified Angus Beef*

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value-added products such as corned beef, frankfurters, cooked roast and prime rib are being used in hospitals, deli's, casinos and hotels. The value-added products open the door to *Certified Angus Beef* sales in places where fresh meat products are not utilized.

The main goal of the CAB Program is and has been to increase the demand for registered Angus seedstock. The success of the CAB Program has initiated the implementation of value-based pricing. Thus contributing to a greater demand for Angus and Angus crossbred cattle.

When you see the attractive red and black *Certified Angus Beef* trademark, you know it stands for quality and consistency. The *Certified Angus Beef* trademark can only be used on beef that has met all of the specifications set by the CAB Program and by those licensed to sell the product.

The CAB Program is the largest branded beef program in the world, it's mimicked and envied but not surpassed. The CAB Program is setting the course for a bright future for both the Program and the Angus producer. The continual increase in the total pounds of *Certified Angus Beef* product sold, value-added products, premiums on quality carcasses and the growing popularity of Angus cattle among commercial producers and feeders convinces me and many others that *Certified Angus Beef* and the CAB Program is "A CUT ABOVE."



## Ethics in the Show Ring

by Brett Spader, Rosendale, Mo.

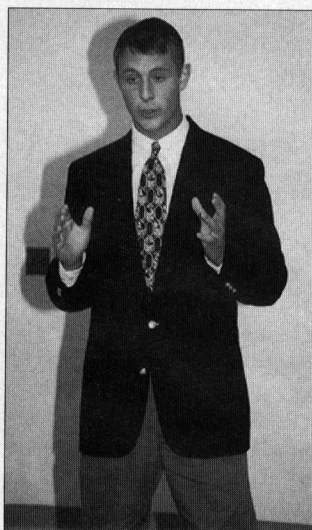
There are many successful people in the world today. And if you ask them how they got there, they will likely tell you they have admired a special person — and they have always tried to emulate the qualities of that man or woman. In other words, the right role model at the right time has been a powerful choice in determining their future success. Just think about it . . . I'm sure we can all reflect on parents, a special teacher, our coach, or a friend who has made a difference in our life. In addition, we can identify organizations such as FFA, 4-H or the National Junior Angus Association that also affect our future as young people.

Good role models are important in all walks of life and all too often we're faced with circumstances that make us think long and hard before we make a decision. A good example is the ethical situation in livestock shows today. At times it seems that winning is the only objective in some people's mind and the purpose of the show, the competition and the camaraderie, are all lost for the sake of the win. In this case, the wrong role model was followed.

Youth livestock programs have come under fire in the last few years because of some isolated incidences of unethical, and sometimes illegal activities. A National Livestock Ethics Council was formed to work initially to eliminate these situations that plague the future of the livestock industry. Chairman of the Council, Dreyfus Froe, said that tremendous progress has been

made in addressing the issue; but more progress is needed.

"Animal well-being, food safety and ethics issues have surfaced from the occurrence of



**Brett Spader, Rosendale, Mo., presents his winning speech "Ethics in the Show Ring."**

several isolated incidences which received heavy media coverage," states Jeff Goodwin, Extension and youth specialist with the University of Idaho.

He said that four major categories of improper practices have surfaced in recent years. They are improper uses of animal health products on show stock, diuretics to make an animal lose weight, anti-inflammatory agents to make an animal walk better and performance enhancing drugs to build up muscle.

Also there have been instances of false ownership and substitution of animals.

It makes one wonder what might influence young people to even consider these deceptive practices, but we can be assured

that someone or something has influenced their decision. In these cases, the wrong role model has prevailed.

The state of Ohio received a wake-up call on this issue in 1994. It was then that a meat inspector found vegetable oil in the glands of a slaughtered show steer. Further investigation found seven of the top 10 steers and the grand champion lamb from the Ohio State Fair had been tampered with. Swift action by officials withdrew all premium money and prizes from the exhibitors of the animals and the exhibitors were banned from showing in Ohio for life.

As young people in agriculture it's important that we understand right from wrong. It's important that we understand the big picture of why we compete even though there's nothing wrong with winning. What's important is that it's done fair and square. As Albert Schweitzer said, "Example is not the main thing in influencing others; it's the only thing."

In an effort to place a positive spin on the subject, the National FFA Convention held its first workshop on livestock show ethics this past year with more than 500 FFA members and agricultural teachers attending.

Goodwin started the session with the debut of his newest video entitled, "The Line in the Sand." The video is centered around three questions to ask yourself about livestock showing practices:

1. Does the practice violate the FDA laws?

2. Does the practice fraudulently misrepresent the animal?
3. Does the practice compromise the welfare of the animal?

If any of these questions are answered yes, then the practice is considered unacceptable.

The National 4-H Congress held a similar program in 1996 titled, "Ethics in Livestock Shows/Ethics in Our Lives." The workshop was also presented by Goodwin and emphasized not only ethics in showing but also ethics in our everyday lives.

Goodwin stated that members attending the seminar are expected to be the troopers on this issue back in their home states. He went on to say that if 4-H and FFA members are the ones carrying the message of livestock show ethics, then something positive will happen.

It's fairly apparent that the junior livestock show area has taken this issue very seriously, partially because it's important for fair competition in junior shows and partially because it's sending the right message to

young people about the way they conduct their lives; now and in the future.

It's said that a good example is the best sermon. The example and leadership we give as young people and the example and leadership we receive from adults will stay with us the rest of our lives.

General Colin Powell summed it up nicely when he said, "The most important thing I learned is that soldiers watch what their leaders do. You can give them classes and lecture

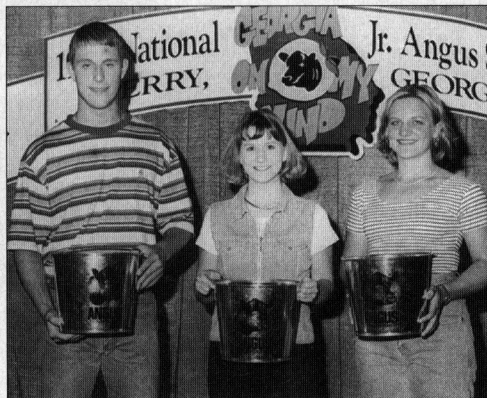
them forever, but it's your personal example of character they will follow."

It's time for everyone involved with junior livestock competition to heed these important words. The thrill of victory is always a goal but we must always reach that goal with the knowledge that it's been accomplished in a fair way. Then and only then do we compete fairly and set the example for others to follow.

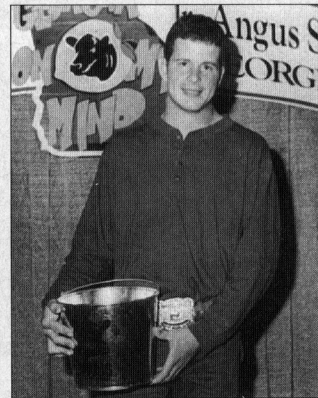
## MORE NJAS SPEECH CONTEST WINNERS



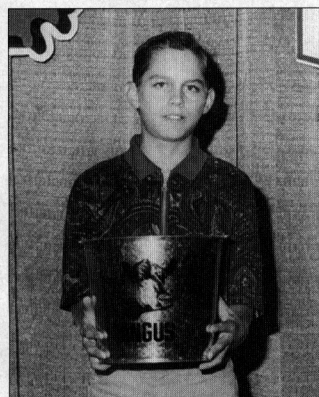
Top junior division public speaking contestants pictured (l to r) are: **Garrett Lampe**, first; **Jennifer Ourso**, Donaldsonville, La., second; and **Lindsey Weber**, Dousman, Wis., third.



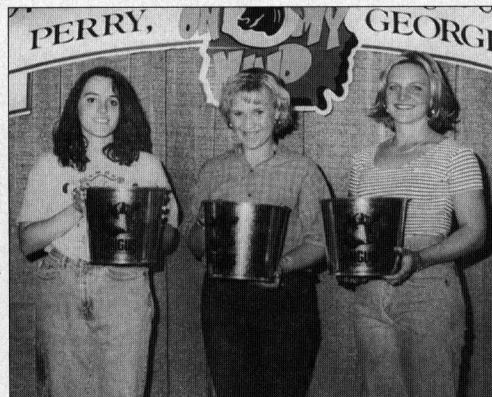
Top intermediate division public speaking contestants pictured (l to r) are: **Brett Spader**, first; **Abbe Price**, Decatur, Ark., second; and **Jamie Meyers**, Douglass, Kan., third.



**John Maples**, Waverly, Ala., won top honors in the senior division public speaking contest.



**Garrett Lampe** was the first place winner in the junior division extemporaneous speaking contest.



Top intermediate division extemporaneous speaking contestants pictured (l to r) are: **Cindy Rezac**, St. Marys, Kan., first; **Jessica Sawyer**, Bassett, Neb., second; and **Jamie Meyer**, third.



Top senior division extemporaneous speaking contestants pictured (l to r) are: **Jesse McCurry**, Sedgwick, Kan., first; **Janelle Sommers**, Silver Lake, Ind., second; and **Charles Krininger III**, Charlestown, Ind., third.

