

Fearless Speakers

Junior Angus exhibitors showcase their public speaking skills.

compiled by Lindsay King, assistant editor

For a majority of the population, one of the hardest things to do in this world is stand up in front of an audience and speak. Yet, year after year, National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members prove they have the grit and guts to not only get the job done, but to do so with class, style and accuracy. From dissecting the 2% to reviewing the meaning of food safety and the definition of meat, these NJAA Prepared Public Speaking Contest division winners are advocates for not only the beef industry, but for agriculture as a whole.

Juniors competed during the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Madison, Wis., July 7-13. Junior and intermediate division contestants could speak on any subject pertaining to Angus cattle or the beef industry.

Senior division contestants were asked to address recent natural disasters that have affected the nation, how can the agricultural industry prepare and/or react for future natural disasters.

This year's winners were Lilly Larson, Okeechobee, Fla., junior A division; Alexis Koelling, Curryville, Mo., junior B division; Clay Pelton, Paradise, Kan., intermediate A division; Alexandria Cozzitorto, Olathe, Kan., intermediate B division; and Madeline Fugate, Mahomet, Ill., senior division.

Here are three winning speeches, with the rest to be junior contributions to future *Angus Journals*. Remember, these speeches were given orally, so there is an added element missing from the printed version.

The Impact of the 2%

by Alexis Koelling, junior B winner

I struggle in math. The thought of walking in to my geometry class this fall makes my palms sweat and puts butterflies in my stomach. I started at a new school this past fall, and when I got my first math test back, I learned that "doing what I had always done" to prepare, was not going to cut it. In my family, we don't do average, and that first math score, was AVERAGE. I knew that I had better come up with a really good plan to raise my grade. I planned to spend an extra 30 minutes, three days per week completely dedicated to math.

When I got my next test back, my heart was pounding but my grade... was an A. I was so excited I risked

getting in trouble for using my phone when I texted my mom, "I. Get. Math." I was so motivated by my math success that I even calculated that 30 minutes, three times per week was only 2% of my time. Who would have known that 2% extra time would completely change my grade from a C to an A? I have heard "2%" thrown around, but I never thought that was much... like a 2% additional discount if you order your seed early, a 2% ATM fee, or even 2% milk. I always thought, 2% is little to nothing; why even bother? Go for the whole milk, it tastes better anyway! It turns out, that 2% has a significant impact in many things including goal setting, managing the cow herd and

producing our food.

It amazes me the difference a little extra effort makes. Authors Sam Parker and Mac Anderson wrote a book about extra effort titled, "212... The Extra Degree." In this book, it centers around the following premise, "At 211°, water is hot. At 212°, it boils. And with boiling water, comes steam... And with steam, you can power a locomotive." Their premise indicates that by raising the temperature by one EXTRA degree, is all the difference between something that is simply hot and something that generates enough force to power a machine. This motivated me, as it should all of us to make that extra effort in each goal we commit to

achieve. That belief of giving that extra 2% can be seen in our daily lives.

Hall of Fame coach, Vince Lombardi states, “Inches make the champion.” Did you know that the average margin of victory for the last 25 years in all major PGA golf tournaments combined was less than three strokes? The average margin of victory in the Daytona 500 and the Indianapolis 500 (combined) over the last ten years has been 1.54 seconds. This extra effort equating to success isn’t just seen in sports by people that we do not know. This can be applied to any goal that you or I have. My math tests were just one example. Maybe your goal is to pay off a mortgage... making one extra payment per year on a thirty-year mortgage can cut the loan to twenty-two years. That is eight years of not making a payment! Maybe your goal is to win the 2019 National Junior Angus Show... whatever your goal is, all it takes is determining your plan and actionable commitment to achieve success. A single degree

or giving that extra 2% can change everything.

The cow-calf producer has the same initial goal. One calf per cow per year. While there are many factors that influence the outcome of that goal, one of the keys to success, is cow herd nutrition. If that cow is either too skinny or too fat, she will have issues conceiving and calving in one year. A dry cow requires 2% of her body weight in feed and a lactating cow 2.5% daily to be considered optimal for breeding. The magic 2%. But this time, that 2% isn’t extra, rather essential for the cow to have a calf. According to Beef Magazine, it costs a cattleman \$900 per year to run one beef cow. Therefore, a cow that does not have a calf not only costs the cattleman, but at the end of the day, shortens the beef supply and increases the cost of beef for the consumer.

In the year 2016, there were 30.5 million head produced by American cattlemen. Our industry is the most complex of any food produced, as it takes 2-3 years to bring beef from the

farm to the plate. The significance of all this data is all this was completed by 2% of Americans involved in production agriculture. Today, we are feeding 7.6 billion people worldwide with only 2% of Americans producing food. By the year 2050, that 2% will have to produce enough food to feed an expected population of 9.7 billion—70% more food than what is produced now. The magical 2% is essential for human existence. I am proud to be part of the 2%. Our family exports 550 head of slaughter cattle annually. I know and understand the time and 2% effort it takes to get one calf per cow per year and the joys and discouragements that go along with that task.

The impact of the 2%. What started in my mind as a way to increase my math grade which ultimately only affects me, expanded into feeding the world. A task that is essential for our world to exist. It continues to amaze me the difference something so small can make. As agriculturalists, we are the difference. Never underestimate the impact of the 2%.

Fake Meat

by Clay Pelton, intermediate A winner

“Fake news” was not a term many people used 18 months ago, but it is now seen as one of the greatest threats to free debate and the western order. As well as being the favorite term of President Trump, it was also named 2017’s word of the year, raising tensions between nations and may lead to regulation of social media. And yet, nobody can seem to agree on what it is, how much of a problem it is and what to do about it.

My generation doesn’t know a world without social media. Coming home after a basketball game on the bus, I had some free time, so I went to my recommended section on YouTube. When I want quick entertainment, this is always a good bet. The video I went to was about two friends that went to White Castle, and one ordered this plant-based burger called the Ultimate burger, while the other guy wanted

nothing to do with anything that wasn’t actual beef. An argument ensued, and a few days later, the friend that ordered the Ultimate burger brought home a couple of these and tricked his hungry friend who assumed he was eating a real hamburger. The friend asked him if he liked the burger, and he said it was delicious. Only to find out a few seconds later that he had been tricked.

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Although the premise behind the video made me laugh, the idea that a plant-based product was now competing for the business in which my family makes their living, didn't. My family owns a multi-generational Angus cow-calf ranching operation in Western Kansas running nearly 350 cows and operating over 3,500 acres. The steers, bulls and replacement females are merchandised yearly.

Companies like Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat are combining plant-based ingredients and science, rather than animals, to create fake-meat burgers and other products that taste and even bleed like the real thing. Webster's dictionary defines the word meat as the flesh of any ANIMAL as food. It looks, feels, tastes and smells like ground beef, even though it is made entirely of plants. A product of genetic engineering, it is designed to take on the multi-billion dollar beef industry. Now the U.S. Cattlemen's Association is looking to draw a line in the sand. In February of this year, it filed a 15-page petition with the U.S. Department of Agriculture calling for an official definition of the term beef and more broadly, meat.

While alternative protein sources are not a direct threat to the beef industry, we do see improper labeling of these products as misleading, said Lia Biondo, the association's policy and outreach director. Not everyone sees it that way. Ethan Brown, founder and CEO of BEYOND MEAT, said "I think it could help us more than hurt us because it starts a national dialogue around what really is meat, and if the origin of meat really matters to the consumer. The cattle ranching group contends that if the product is going to be labeled beef, it should come from the flesh of cattle. And that means products like

veggie burgers, and tofurkey won't make the cut.

These foods are dubbed "fake meat." The Good Food Institute breaks the meat-substitute market into two groups: clean meat and plant-based meat. Clean meat refers to meat grown in a lab from a small amount of animal stem cells. This kind of meat isn't on the market yet but it is in development and with companies like Cargill and Tyson investing we could see "clean meat" entering into the beef market soon. The Cattlemen's association is not looking to face their competitors head on, they would rather petition the USDA to police the use of certain terms on labels to keep the playing field in the cattlemen's favor.

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Allied Market research has said that the plant-based industry could bring in \$5.2 billion dollars in sales by 2020, and that means a lot more "fake meat" products will be hitting the shelves. Most Americans are at least two generations removed from any type of agriculture and are barely able to grow a single tomato plant, not to mention understand the concepts involved in conception to consumption of beef production. Instead, giant superstores supply their food choices, clean and without any dirt on them. Magic brought their dinner to the table as their connection to ranchers and the land continues to fade. American agriculture has been going through a transformation for decades and few

have noticed it. We starve ourselves for knowledge while we fuel up on food.

For me, I am the future of agriculture. I was lucky enough to be born on an Angus ranch. I was lucky enough to be born into an association that in 1978 created its own branded beef, *Certified Angus Beef*[®]. The beef brand that will carry my legacy into the next generation. The brand was created when beef was once again under fire for consistency problems. Getting a good steak was hit or miss. These ranchers banded together and knew they could do better. They created a set of 10 uncompromising standards for taste and then found the Angus ranchers to help. Dr. Bob Van Stavern was brought on as a renowned beef scientist and developed the heartland's first premium beef brand. Decades later, the vision of being the best of the best still remains.

Despite being at the top end of the beef market, growing competition and a crowded branded market, CAB has proven successful at grabbing a greater portion of industry sales. In fiscal year 2017, totals equaled 1.12 billion pounds, a 10% increase over 2016 and 25% larger than two years ago. Not to mention, international sales grew 26.4%. These numbers represent a strong statement to the importance of quality and consumer demand not only domestically but internationally.

I believe in real meat, Certified Angus Beef. I believe that others will continue to try to gain with "fake meat." I also believe that if we as beef producers do not advocate for our product, uneducated, removed consumers will believe the FAKE NEWS that individuals wanting to take our market share feed them. 