

Chuck Knows Beef, Chuck Knows Best

Chuck Knows Beef serves up virtual beef cooking information.

by Megan Silveira

“Hey Chuck!”

The call rings out across the supermarket, as fellow shoppers look for a response to the cry. The automated voice coming from a cell phone is the last thing anyone in the store expected to hear, but beef producers across the country can be confident that Chuck won't stay unfamiliar to their customers for much longer.

“Chuck is the first all-knowing beef artificial intelligence tool,” says Season Solorio, brand marketing and communications team lead at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), a contractor to the Beef Checkoff. “He pulls all of the information from the Beef. Its What's For Dinner. website together and serves it up in an engaging way.”

Artificial intelligence, real information

Solorio says recent years have shown an explosion of smart speakers, such as Alexa and Google Home™. Her team witnessed the changes and improvements in technology and saw them as a chance to reach more consumers.

“We want to serve up information to consumers

in ways they are drawn to,” she says. “Our goal was to really utilize the information that is available through www.BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com and bring it into emerging platforms.”

When a consumer has a question about the beef industry or its products, they can head to ChuckKnowsBeef.com, type their questions into a chat box and instantly get information. If the individuals own an Amazon Alexa or a Google Home device, they also have the option of downloading the Chuck Knows Beef “skill” and can talk to Chuck.

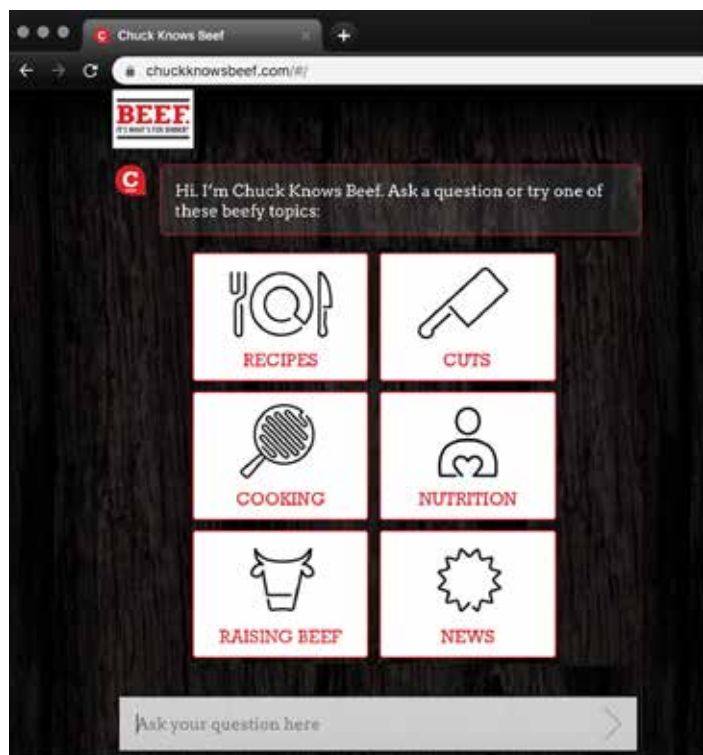
Chuck was born in October 2018, officially launched to the public in March 2019 and he has only gotten smarter ever since. Being a system based on artificial intelligence, every time Chuck is asked a question, Solorio says he actually grows smarter, learning from each interaction he's had with the more than one million visitors.

Solorio says producers are sometimes unable to provide the information consumers need, especially when it comes to the purchase and preparation of cuts of beef. Chuck can provide the clarity

customers need to buy beef.

When customers go to the supermarket, Solorio says they can be overwhelmed by the “sea of red” displayed in the meat counter. From identification of cuts of beef to recipes, Solorio believes possessing simple knowledge about beef gives customers the confidence to purchase and prepare beef.

“We want to help [consumers]



overcome those barriers,” she adds. “[We built this program] with the intent that you can ask Chuck anything to help create a better beef eating experience.”

Solorio explains building a better base of knowledge in beef consumers, creating that understanding of the industry and its products, leads to a higher demand.

Since its soft launch in October 2018, Chuck’s number one asked question is “what is a flank steak?” While those familiar with the beef industry consider questions like this to be “simple,” Solorio says many consumers lack the general knowledge necessary to put beef products on the dinner table.

Chuck is capable of bridging the gap between consumers and producers, effectively keeping beef at the center of dinner plates.

Lifeline in a sea of red

“I think this is the way people are going to start getting their information about beef,” says

Continued on page 86



Future focus

Changes in technology created the idea for Chuck Knows Beef, so it is no surprise the development team is looking towards the future. Beef producers who serve on Beef Checkoff committees are always looking for cutting-edge ways to create beef demand growth.

“Consumers do love beef producers,” says Season Solorio, brand marketing and communications team lead for the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA). “They have a lot of respect for farmers and ranchers. We’re just trying to showcase the great products consumers love and tie that back to the great quality care that comes from cattle producers all across the country.”

Showcasing that care requires evolution and excitement, Solorio adds. With the use of artificial intelligence and sound voice technology, Chuck meets this need and the future holds even more promise for the beef consumer.

On the horizon, Solorio says the NCBA and her team see Chuck offering a more visual experience instead of an audio-

based one with the addition of an augmented reality. This extension of Chuck could allow a consumer to use the camera application on their smartphones to give Chuck the ability to identify cuts of beef on the counter and connect them to cooking tips, recipes and more.

Nothing is set in stone for Chuck’s future, Solorio says, but ideas like this one continue to capture the essence of the beef industry. At the end of the day, she says producers want to bridge that gap between the ranch and the customers.

“We want consumers to experience and ultimately believe that beef is the top protein because of the amazing people who work hard to raise beef, because of the unbeatable protein that beef provides and because of the great and pleasurable experience of eating beef,” Solorio says. “We know that when consumers are aware of the Beef. It’s What’s For Dinner. brand through programs like Chuck Knows Beef, they eat beef more often, and that’s directly helping increase beef demand — the goal of everyone in the beef industry.”

Brandon Kahle, meat pilot plant manager at the Robert M. Kerr Food and Agricultural Products Center (FAPC) housed on the Oklahoma State University (OSU) campus.

Kahle says he has watched society drift further away from the farm as generations pass by. He sees programs like Chuck have a lifeline capable of pulling consumers back towards the industry.

“Technology like this, available at the tap of a button, provides the best access for our consumers,” he adds.

The more people know about the beef industry, the better off producers are going to be. He describes Chuck as a “vital tool” for helping educate customers.

While Kahle does wish for a world

where producers and consumers communicate more openly, he says producers cannot expect their customers to possess the same knowledge of the industry.


Knowledge about cuts of beef and meat processing are not taught to the average person. Those who grew up around the cattle industry are knowledgeable about livestock and meat processing, but Kahle says others without that background do not have the same luxury.

“People aren’t taught that kind of information in the classroom. You have to search for that or grow up on a farm,” he says.

This lack of knowledge creates a fear of the unknown in our consumers, which Kahle believes is

responsible for pushing people away from purchasing beef products in the first place.

However, Kahle says outreach methods like Chuck mark an exciting time for the beef industry — a time where beef producers are learning to appeal to customers through a broader, more innovative platform.

“We need something like Chuck to help keep pushing a positive agenda,” he says. “Chuck can help us share the message that beef is good for you, it’s a good option, and people should be consuming it.” 

Editor’s note: Megan Silveira is a freelance writer from Denair, Calif.

2019 Fall Female Classic Sale

Saturday, October 26, 2019 • 12:00 p.m.

Hosted by: Woodside South Farm, New Market, VA

Featuring more than 55 lots of quality Angus cattle from breeders throughout the region, including a heifer pregnancy from Woodside Farms, due February 13, 2020, out of Woodside Rita 5GN1 of A116 (reg. 18419780) and sired by Sydgen Enhance (reg. 18170041)



For more information, or to request a sale book, please contact Chuck Alexander by phone at 540-533-5669 or email at tpangus1993@yahoo.com or Jason Arehart by phone at 540-290-4251 or email at jasonarehart@yahoo.com

Sponsored by:



Northern Virginia
Angus Association
www.nv Angus.org