

Juniors Reach New Altitudes

STORY & PHOTOS BY SHELIA STANNARD



Making friendships, seeing the mountains for the first time and learning about different ranching practices were some of the favorite experiences for nearly 120 junior Angus members and advisors from 22 states. A variety of activities gave those who attended the eighth annual LEAD (Leaders Engaged in Angus Development) Conference in Fort Collins, Colo., the opportunity to “Reach New Altitudes.”

Jaci Jagers, Sulphur Bluff, Texas, says she enjoyed meeting people at her first LEAD Conference.



“It’s been fun meeting new friends,” Jagers says. “I hope to go to more LEADs in the future.”

Patrick Driscoll, Williamsburg, Iowa, who rode a Greyhound bus with five other Iowa members, agrees.

“My favorite part of LEAD is being with a lot of people from a lot of different places,” Driscoll says.

Besides forming friendships, the young people were able to build leadership skills and to learn about various beef industry issues and practices. Keynote speaker Tom Sutherland, a former Colorado State University professor, opened the event by challenging the youth to take risks in their leadership positions.

Sutherland described an experience he had while he was the dean of agriculture at the American University of Beirut, a position he knew carried risk. Returning to Beirut after an absence, Sutherland was seized

by eight men, armed with sub-machine guns, who held him captive in an underground room for more than six years.

In addition to telling his tale about being held hostage, Sutherland told about his own experiences growing up on his family’s farm in Scotland. He told the youth they should feel privileged to grow up on a farm or ranch and should take advantage of their many opportunities.

“I felt underprivileged while I worked Saturdays and Sundays, while all my friends went to the seaside,” he said. But he says his work ethic helped him become the leader he is today.

Other opening-night speakers included Deanna Scrimger, Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB), who talked about CAB’s role as the official branded beef supplier to the 2002 Winter Olympic Games; Tim Schiefelbein, ConAgra Beef Co., who spoke about grid marketing

and the importance of producing a uniform product for the consumer; and J.D. Tatum, interim head of the Colorado State University (CSU) department of animal sciences, who welcomed the participants to the conference, which was co-hosted by CSU.

A bus trip to nearly 10,000 feet elevation was a highlight of the conference, as many participants viewed the mountains for the first time. Speakers at the Rouse Ranch Colorado Beef Improvement Center, Saratoga, Wyo., gave the junior Angus leaders a glimpse of Intermountain Western ranching.

Kade Devillier, Shiro, Texas, says he liked that this LEAD Conference was more focused on agriculture, and he liked the trip to the mountains.

“I discovered there is more to the world than flat land and hay bales,” Devillier says.

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A: Nearly 120 Angus youth and leaders gathered Aug. 3-6 in Fort Collins, Colo., for the Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) Conference. They took time from their busy days to take this picture at the summit of Snowy Mountain Pass where they experienced wind chills and 40° temperatures at 10,000 feet.

B: Tim Schiefelbein, ConAgra Beef Co., addresses the group during the opening night of LEAD. He talked about grid marketing and emphasized that producers must produce for the consumer to be successful.

C: Callie Birdsell, Sparta, N.C.; Jennifer Stamey, Statesville, N.C.; and Virginia Dyson, Amherst, Va., enjoy a picnic lunch at one of the trailheads to Snowy Mountain Pass. The buses stopped long enough for the youth to eat lunch and to walk around a lake and waterfall.

D: Miranda Grissom, Prague, Okla.; Allison Porter, Jefferson, Ga.; Julie Scarlett, Snow Camp, N.C.; and Megan Birdsell, Sparta, N.C., took advantage of their break to get some fresh air and exercise while looking at and photographing the mountains and wildflowers.

E: LEAD attendees welcomed a break on the summit of the Snowy Mountain Pass as they stretch their legs after riding a distance in the CSU buses. They didn't expect to be hit with heavy winds and 40°-50° temperatures in early August.

F: Abby Rayl, Hutchinson, Kan., and Katie Cravens, Van Buren, Ark., take a sack lunch and soda during their lunch break on the way to Saratoga, Wyo. CSU prepared the lunches that the juniors enjoyed while they had a chance to wander around the waterfalls and lakes in the mountains.



JUNIORS REACH NEW ALTITUDES CONTINUED

Veterinarian Lannie Wedell discussed pulmonary arterial hypertension, also known as high-altitude disease, dropsy or brisket disease, and demonstrated a pulmonary arterial pressure (PAP) test. Bob Jarrell, also known to many as the “Snowman,” presented a talk on water management and how snow fences are used along the Wyoming roadways. Eric Downing gave a presentation on the future of sexed semen as a tool in the beef industry.

The day concluded with a judging contest, a hayride pasture tour and a motivational talk by John Edwards of the Key Bar Ranch, Glendo, Wyo. Edwards challenged the attendees to care about other people and to make a difference by helping others.

Angie Sinclair, Fort Collins, Colo., says she enjoyed learning about the challenges of raising cattle at higher elevations “where the trees grow straight.”

“Learning about the snow fences was pretty cool,” Sinclair says. “I also liked learning about the synchronization of estrous cycles.”

The LEAD participants toured the new CSU Agricultural Research, Development and Education Center. While there, four graduate students spoke to the Angus youth. A panel including Holly Foster, Laura Behrends and Bryce Moore challenged the future leaders of the beef industry to take advantage of opportunities. All three panelists are participants in CSU’s beef industry leadership program. Jose Mendes, a graduate student from Brazil, talked about agriculture from a global perspective.

Renowned cattle-handling specialist Temple Grandin demonstrated proper handling procedures and also discussed the proper way to halter-break show animals.

In addition to industry speakers and tours, directors of

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G: Tom Field, associate professor at Colorado State University (CSU), welcomes LEAD participants to the Rouse Ranch Beef Improvement Center in Saratoga, Wyo. Field was instrumental in planning the activities for LEAD, as well as challenging the young leaders to continue making Angus the No. 1 breed. "Any commercial producer who is still in the business is one smart dude. Hang out with the commercial producers and learn with your customers," he says.

H: Veterinarian Lannie Wedell, Walden, Colo., presents a talk on pulmonary arterial hypertension and demonstrates a pulmonary arterial pressure (PAP) test at the Beef Improvement Center. He explains that, at the high altitudes, as the heart muscle works harder, the muscles stretch, and the animal can go into congestive heart failure. To perform the PAP test, a 5-foot catheter is worked through the jugular vein to the pulmonary artery, and the pressure is measured.

I: Roy Roath, a member of the CSU range ecosystem sciences department, talks to the young people atop the Snowy Mountain Pass. Roath discussed rangeland and waters, as well as the use of government lands in the West.

J: The LEAD participants listen as Roath explains how ranchers in Western states use government lands. He also described the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). For many, this was the first chance to see the mountains and to learn about various land uses.

K: During one of the junior Board workshops, Jacob Wolfrey, White Post, Va.; Lacey Robinson, Montgomery City, Mo.; Cody Sankey, Council Grove, Kan. (hidden); and Jennifer Grappe, Springhill, La., explain how they could reduce stress.

After a short presentation by Board members Lindsey Trospen, Julie Scarlett and Julie Dameron, the youth were divided into groups and were posed a health-related question. They were to answer the question by making a paper person and cutting their answers from magazines and newspapers.

L: Dennis Craig, Fort Collins, Colo., and his culinary assistants grill a tri-tip dinner Saturday night at Middlefield Farms outside Fort Collins. The Heckendorf family hosted an evening for the youth and advisors that included a barn dance.

M: A deck of cards keeps these juniors entertained while dinner is being prepared at Middlefield Farms during the last night of LEAD. Julie Scarlett and Sy Olson, both members of the junior Board, lead other Texas and North Carolina card sharks in a game.



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N: Temple Grandin, a CSU professor and world-renowned cattle-handling specialist, describes her handling system to the young cattle producers at the CSU Agricultural Research, Development & Education Center. She explained how the cattle think and how her rounded system makes them feel more comfortable.

the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) Board of Directors conducted interactive workshops for the attendees. The sessions focused on personal wellness, preparing scholarship applications and résumés, and the various segments and marketing trends within the beef industry. The final workshop, "Who Wants to Win a 100-Grand," parodied a popular game show and tested the contestants' knowledge of the American Angus Association's programs and history.

"The 100-Grand workshop was a lot of fun and educational," says Coye Crenshaw-Kleve, Manhattan, Kan., who won the 100-Grand candy bar, a feat accomplished by correctly answering a series of questions.

Tom Field, associate professor of animal science at CSU, encouraged the LEAD attendees to continue to pursue growth in the Angus industry. He cited the continued growth of CAB and average bull prices during the past five years as indicators of survival for the Angus breed, and he told them to continue working with commercial cattle producers.

After three days of riding buses, forming friendships and expanding their leadership skills and beef industry knowledge, the 2000 LEAD Conference came to a close.

"LEAD was a huge success," says Jennifer Ourso, Donaldsonville, La. "I had the opportunity to spend time with friends, meet new people and learn new information about the Angus breed and beef industry. I can't wait to go to Tennessee next summer!"



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O: NJAA Chairman Sonya Smith (right) became a game-show hostess for an afternoon. Here she quizzes hot-seat contestant Kristen Oaks, Calhoun, La., about the history and programs of the American Angus Association and the NJAA. Contestants of "Who Wants to Win a 100-Grand?" were allowed one lifeline to poll the audience. If they answered all questions correctly, they were awarded a 100-Grand® candy bar. Sonya's assistants, John Melton and Melissa Pickrell, awarded other contestants consolation prizes.



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P: Teresa Craig, Fort Collins, Colo., and Lacey Robinson, Montgomery City, Mo., participate in a roundtable discussion where they had the chance to exchange ideas with other state junior Angus associations. The roundtable discussions allowed the juniors to share ideas for member recruitment and fund-raising with other states.



R

Q: During a junior Board workshop, Kayla Tuggle, Ithaca, Mich., and Amy Wolfrey, White Plains, Va., are challenged with connecting nine dots with five lines without lifting their pencils. The exercise, led by Allison Porter, Miranda Grissom and Jamie Meyer, taught the junior leaders to "think outside the box" and to grasp the "big picture."

R: Jake Betts, Dorrance, Kan.; Brittney Burns, Kickapoo, Ill. (standing); and Carrie Sullivan, Saint Charles, Iowa, work together to match meat cuts with their proper location on a picture of a steer during a junior Board workshop. NJAA directors Garrett



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Pohlman, Brandon Douglas, and Sy Olson directed the workshop on beef cuts, marketing options and the ever-changing cattle cycle.

S: CSU co-hosted the 2000 LEAD Conference in Fort Collins, Colo. The university arranged for buses and speakers for the event.