

YOUR VIEW

by Lauren Wolter, Aviston, Ill.

First-Place Junior Division Creative Writing Contest

Illinois Angus member's winning piece from the 2022 National Junior Angus Show.

Certified Angus Beef[®] (CAB). A top-of-the-line product that perfectly combines flavorful marbling with leanness and tenderness. As Angus producers, we are incredibly proud of our superior beef quality and the brand that we have created to represent it. Everyone within the breed is aware of CAB, but when it comes down to truly understanding the product, there is a disconnect between producers and corporate employees; particularly when it comes to educating our youth.

Wooster, Ohio, is home to the unrivaled CAB headquarters. While we hear about the incredible headquarters all the time, there is no real opportunity for youth to get an inside look at the heart of CAB. An event hosted in Wooster would create the perfect opportunity for juniors to learn about the CAB brand. I propose an exclusive, meat-science-focused conference for intermediate- and senior-level juniors called A Maturity.

A Maturity is a conference title with many meanings. The title is a reference to youth, the mature attitude juniors should bring to the event, and of course the age requirement for CAB meat cattle. Throughout the conference, juniors would have the opportunity to explore CAB from a more in-depth angle. The event would hopefully achieve three main goals: educate youth about beef production, generate new connections for juniors, and create new advocates for the beef industry

and CAB products as a whole.

Every year one team wins the Black Kettle Award for exceptional performance in the [Auxiliary-sponsored All-American] CAB Cook-off contest at the National Junior Angus Show. I propose that the winning team could be awarded acceptance to this conference in order to get the ball rolling. From there, an application process would be instituted to keep the list of attendees small and manageable, while also making the experience a coveted one.

The event would focus on three main avenues: meat science, culinary skills, and marketing and communications. For the meat science portion, juniors would engage in several educational clinics. They could watch a carcass fabrication and learn about the grading process, then transition to measuring ribeyes and calculating yield grades on actual carcasses. The clinic could cover meats evaluation and retail cut identification, especially for the unique cuts CAB has begun marketing. A sensory activity could also be implemented that would explore the different layers of flavor within the product and how that correlates to quality grade.

The next portion would focus on how CAB is used in the restaurant industry, and how best to serve it at home. Entrepreneurs who are utilizing CAB products could present to the group. Areas of hospitality like proper place settings and

dinner etiquette could be discussed. Headquarter chefs could lead a class that teaches about innovative ways to prepare specialty meat cuts such as ball tip steaks or tri-tip roasts. Different cooking methods and techniques could also be explored. The education could even stretch as far as covering what foods pair best with steaks. Juniors would leave with eloquent and expansive knowledge about putting CAB on the table.

Marketing and communications would be the final area of study for A Maturity students. Groups can compete in a quiz bowl-style game challenging kids to understand the market values for a variety of beef cuts. One of the key lessons would teach students how to properly respond to negative connotations about meat production. Juniors could also engage in a product photo-staging activity to create captions for several avenues of social media marketing. Overall, the clinics would educate youth about meat science and the importance of consumer relations and satisfaction.

A Maturity is the opportunity of a lifetime for juniors within the Angus breed. As a key player in the meat industry, CAB could single-handedly spark a new interest or career path for developing youth. This conference has the opportunity to open doors for many upcoming leaders and add diversity to educational opportunities within the National Junior Angus Association. **AJ**