

Redefining Quality Service

A casual job offer gave McGinley-Schilz Feedyard an award-winning employee.

Story & photos by **Lance Zimmerman**



Manager Ken Schilz is quick to brag about the rare find he brought into his Brule, Neb., feedlot. While usually he is searching for high-quality cattle of known background, this time he found an employee with the background to redefine customer service at his Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB)-licensed feedlot.

An informal job offer in a downtown parking lot brought Kelly Crymble to McGinley-Schilz Feedyard Ltd. Two years later, she has earned her keep managing the customer service efforts at the feedlot and winning the 2005 CAB Runner-Up Quality Assurance (QA) Officer of the Year Award.

Natural ability

Schilz says the accomplishments have come naturally to Crymble because of her credentials and ability to handle any feedlot task. She has acquired experiences that make

her “the perfect fit for the job,” he adds.

Growing up in Wyoming, Crymble was always close to livestock and 4-H, which led to collegiate livestock judging and a role coaching the team. She also worked as a bank loan officer and earned a paralegal certificate while working for an attorney.

“You will not find anybody in the feeding industry who knows as much about their job as Kelly,” Schilz says. “She can handle customer service, selling cattle, financing, contracts and everything else. She knows her stuff.”

The 18,000-head-capacity business is a “small feedyard that tries to do big yard things,” Schilz says, and Crymble’s total package of skills helps fulfill the mission. They work as a team to build stronger relationships among the feedlot’s growing customer base.

Schilz says he knew the yard was moving in the right direction when it received the

► Kelly Crymble, CAB runner-up QA officer of the year, has nearly doubled enrollments in the FLP at McGinley-Schilz Feedyard Ltd.

2003 CAB Progressive Partner Award.

Shortly after that, he hired Crymble to help follow through on the goals he set for data capture and reporting.

“We have been told that we have the best information-gathering system out there, and we take pride in that,” Schilz says. “Kelly is a large part of it.”

Increasing enrollments

Crymble has nearly doubled McGinley-Schilz enrollments in the CAB Feedlot-Licensing Program (FLP) and has continually improved *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®)-acceptance rates along the way. Involvement in the CAB Natural program helped boost acceptance beyond most yards that did not produce for the natural market.

Enrollments for 2003 were at 2,769 head, with 25.4% hitting the CAB target. That grew to 4,854 enrollments with a 26.4% CAB-acceptance rate in 2005.

“When cattle come into the feedyard, Kelly takes it upon herself to make sure we enroll every qualified animal in the CAB program,” Schilz says. “Since she has come on board, it has become a priority to get it done the way it needs to be.”

Crymble says enrolling cattle has become engrained in the data capture and reporting system.

The feedlot supplies customers with carcass and closeout information, regardless of their investment in the cattle. The goal is to win them over by proving the ability to feed cattle to a profitable end point, while providing the information to increase profits in the cow-calf phase.

To achieve this goal, Crymble is



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incorporating multiple-year reporting along with yearly information.

“Producers will not only get this year’s information, but last year’s and an average across the years,” Crymble says. “We want to draw on what producers have done and give them a larger picture with the data we have.”

The strategy has helped McGinley-Schilz retain more customers from year to year. Crymble notes, “Producers may not always like what they get back,” but they appreciate having more information to make decisions on herd production.

In turn, customers find it more appealing to retain ownership in cattle as the feedlot works with them to improve calves from generation to generation, she adds.

“It takes a number of years to get a fair assessment of cattle performance,” Crymble says. “There are too many variables to deal with on a one-year basis.”

The feedlot also uses carcass and performance data to assess potential placements in the yard, Schilz says. “Data integrity becomes more important to everyone throughout the supply chain when



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profit and loss decisions come into play. CAB filled an essential role in helping us provide customers with information they can trust.

“We needed someone like Kelly on board to get things taken care of,” Schilz says. “She has helped us turn it around and get it into producers’ hands.”

The relationship with CAB has been beneficial for Crymble, too.

“Everybody I have come in contact with at CAB has been so easy to work with that it makes my job easier,” Crymble says. “If I have a question, I can call up and get an answer. That kind of service makes it easy to do my job for CAB as well.”

CAB Feedlot Specialist Paul Dykstra says the relationship has been “mutually beneficial from the start” — synergy that comes from a healthy partnership.

“Kelly has proven to be a conscientious quality assurance officer since she attended her first QA seminar in North Platte, Neb., last year,” Dykstra says. “She makes it a point to have frequent contact with our supply development office and get information back to producers.”

Crymble says that’s the main goal. “The award is a unique record of accomplishment. It means that I am heading in the right direction — providing producers with information to make herd management decisions. It says that we are providing customers with some of the best service in the business.”

