

A Broader View

Beef Leaders' Institute introduces young cattlemen to various segments of the Angus industry and encourages them to be advocates for agriculture.

by **Molly Witzel**, public relations and communications intern

Twenty select Angus producers from 12 states gathered in Saint Joseph, Mo., June 1-4, to attend the third annual Beef Leaders' Institute (BLI), an educational event hosted by the American Angus Association and funded by the Angus Foundation.

The four-day learning opportunity is designed to give applicants, ages 25-45, a chance to meet with Association staff and industry representatives while networking with their peers in the Angus industry.

"Even though we come from different states and environments, I have learned we all face similar problems and issues," says Ryan Breiner, BLI participant from the Kansas State University Purebred Beef Teaching Unit, Manhattan, Kan. "This experience has taught me that communication is and always will be an important part of leadership at any level."

Participants were provided with a detailed look into the various sectors of the beef industry and given the chance to engage in discussion on current industry issues.

"I feel it is invaluable to see different

aspects of the industry," says Lindsay Williams, BLI participant from Midland Bull Test, Columbus, Mont. "As a producer, I need to appreciate what production levels and specifications are being asked or desired from my customers."

After tours of and presentations by staff of the American Angus Association and its entities — Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI), the Angus Foundation, Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) and Angus Productions Inc. (API) — the group traveled through eastern Nebraska and western Iowa for several in-depth tours of the beef production process.

Tour stops included Gregory Feedlot, a CAB-licensed feedlot at Tabor, Iowa; the Tyson beef processing plant at Dakota City, Neb.; the Whole Foods Market grocery store in Omaha, Neb.; Cargill Meat Solutions, a deli meat processing plant at Nebraska City, Neb.; and Sysco Lincoln, a warehouse and distribution center, and Igenity/GeneSeek, a genetics lab, both of Lincoln, Neb.

"The tours of Tyson and Cargill Meat Solutions were outstanding opportunities

that few producers have," says Josh Worthington, BLI participant from Worthington Angus, Dadeville, Mo. "It was a great chance to see firsthand segments of the industry that, as a producer, we are not exposed to nearly enough. Those tours are vivid reminders that we are in the beef business and we produce food."

Tom Brink, senior vice president and chief risk officer for JBS Five Rivers Cattle Feeding, provided the group with a case study and spoke with the group about the cattle feeding industry.

"He gave me a new understanding of the feedlot industry," says Casey Shaff, BLI participant from VanMeter Angus, Bowling Green, Ky. "Hopefully, it will give me some insight to take home and share with my bull customers to add some value to their calves."

The purpose of BLI is to give producers a general knowledge of food production and expose them to unfamiliar facets of the beef industry. The goal of the program is for participants to develop leadership skills so they can be advocates for the beef industry in their local areas.

"I can be a better spokesperson for the beef industry by being more educated on all aspects of the industry," says Michael Brown, BLI participant from DMB Angus, Afton, Tenn. "This [education] allows me to convey a better message to the general public about our industry,"

This year's BLI participants included Ryan Breiner, Manhattan, Kan.; Brandon New, Leavenworth, Kan.; Lynne Hinrichsen, Westmoreland, Kan.; Casey Shaff, Bowling Green, Ky.; Phillip Martin, Bucklin, Mo.; Douglas Ferrel, Kansas City, Mo.; Paul Raithel, Mexico, Mo.; Jeff Rhode, Gower, Mo.; Josh Worthington, Dadeville, Mo.; Steve and Lindsay Williams, Columbus, Mont.; Trevor Lienemann, Princeton, Neb.; P.J. Trowbridge, Ghent, N.Y.; Justin Spickler, Glenfield, N.D.; Will Cabbage, Pawhuska, Okla.; Gary Coleman, Anderson, S.C.; Mark Johnson, Centerville, S.D.; Michael Brown, Afton, Tenn.; John Morgan Turner, Covington, Tenn.; and Brent Berg, Petersburg, W.Va.

For more information about the American Angus Association or the Beef Leaders' Institute, visit www.angus.org or call 816-383-5100.



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