

Beef Leaders Institute Train

Eighteen cattlemen from 12 states gain invaluable experience on tour.

Story & photos by **Katie Gazda**

Eighteen young men and women from across the country gathered at American Angus Association headquarters in Saint Joseph, Mo., for the fourth annual Beef Leaders Institute (BLI) June 20-23.

Designed for American Angus Association members ages 25-45, BLI serves as a resource to provide insight into all segments of the beef industry, including feedlot, processing, packing and retail. Participants toured plants and operations in Iowa and Nebraska,

covering each industry segment.

Before embarking on the tour, the young cattlemen spent time in the American Angus Association office, where they had the opportunity to meet with staff and to learn the interworkings of the Association and its entities – Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI), the Angus Foundation, Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB), and Angus Productions Inc. (API).

Daren Williams, executive director of communications at the National Cattlemen's

Beef Association (NCBA), joined the group at the office on Tuesday to discuss the Masters of Beef Advocacy (MBA) program. Participants were encouraged to enroll in and complete the MBA program prior to the tour.

"I learned that a lot of consumers are in the dark as far as the production process goes," explained Brien Dodson, Okemah, Okla. "It is really important that the market is based on them and their knowledge of the product."

Dustin Hurlbut of Clark, S.D., agreed.

"We take for granted the promotion of safer beef," he said. "We need to help the consumer understand we do everything possible to ensure our beef is healthy and safe for them; safe, wholesome and nutritious."



► **Left:** NCBA's Daren Williams encouraged BLI participants to share their stories with consumers or those unsure of production agriculture. The young leaders paired off and participated in mock interviews testing their ability to effectively defend the beef industry while maintaining an open mind toward the consumer's point of view.



► Williams answered questions from BLI participants during his discussion on the Masters of Beef Advocacy program.



► **Right:** At Whole Foods in Omaha, BLI participants were introduced to the company's use of the Global Animal Partnership, a five-step animal welfare rating system that scores the meat sold in the store.



ns Future Industry Leaders

Venturing out

Following their time in Saint Joseph, BLI participants embarked on their three-day industry tour. Stops on the 2011 tour included Gregory Feedlots, a CAB®-licensed feedlot near Tabor, Iowa; Tyson Foods, a beef-processing plant at Dakota City, Neb.; the Whole Foods grocery store in Omaha, Neb.; and Cargill Meat Solutions, a deli and ready-to-eat meat-processing facility in Nebraska City, Neb.; as well as Sysco Lincoln,

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Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center. There, he led a discussion entitled “Industry Perspective: Feeders, Consumers & Beyond.” He walked the group through several different marketing grids, discussed breakevens and suggested ways producers could reach maximum profit.

a warehouse and distribution center, and Geneseek, a genetics lab, both of Lincoln, Neb.

Tom Brink, senior vice president and chief risk officer of JBS Five Rivers Cattle Feeding LLC, joined the group in Nebraska City at the

Stronger voice

At the conclusion of the tour, despite coming from diverse backgrounds and

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► **Above:** Unlike many parts of the country, Tabor was green and showed no signs of drought.



► **Above:** David Trowbridge, manager of Gregory Feedlots, showed BLI participants where cattle are handled at the facility.

► **Left:** Gregory Feedlots is a past recipient of the CAB® Licensed Feedlot Partner of the Year award.



► **Right:** The tour began in the fresh meat section but made its way around the entire Whole Foods store. At each stop, employees educated BLI participants on their high-quality natural and organic products.

► **Left:** Each package of meat at Whole Foods contains a score from the Global Animal Partnership ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating “no crowding” and 5 indicating an “animal centered” lifestyle.



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operations, BLI attendees had the same general desire to see the beef industry progress into the future.

“The more I know, the easier it is to promote the beef industry. You have the information to do damage control and tell the whole story,” explained Cory Poser, Denton, Mont. “There is too much negative out there in the industry, and if we don’t know each side of it, we will lose the battle.”

“We need to use our voice to preserve the industry and keep its future intact,” elaborated Katy Kemp, Sun Prairie, Wis. “[BLI] is giving me the tools I need to take it a step further. It’s making me an advocate for the industry.”

Participants in the 2011 Beef Leaders Institute program included: Thomas Black, Warsaw, Mo.; Chad Daugherty, Cerro Gordo, Ill.; Brien Dodson, Okemah, Okla.; Cody Edgar, Rockham, S.D.; J.R. Lund, Lewistown, Mont.; Andrew Maupin, Larkspur, Colo.; Joseph McKellar, Mount Pleasant, Texas; Brian Meier, Jackson, Mo.; Al Meyers, Oakville, Mo.; Rob Fanning, Cordova, Ill.; Dan Hanrahan, Winterset, Iowa; Michael Honold, Coon Rapids, Iowa; Dustin Hurlbut, Clark, S.D.; Katy Kemp, Sun Prairie, Wis.; Cory Poser, Denton, Mont.; Jason Pratt, Atkins, Va.; Chris Throne, Lexington, Ga.; and Dru Uden, Franklin, Neb.

The educational event, which is limited to 20 attendees each year, is hosted by the American Angus Association and funded by the Angus Foundation as part of its mission to support education, youth and research.

For more information on the Beef Leaders Institute, visit www.angus.org or contact Shelia Stannard at sstannard@angus.org or 816-383-5152. Applications to participate were due March 1 this year, so mark your calendar and follow your *Angus Journal* to watch for next year’s deadline.

► **Right:** Wednesday afternoon’s session took place at the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center in Nebraska City. The center served as a museum of artifacts and examples of what Lewis and Clark would have seen or utilized on the trail.



► **Left:** BLI participants helped themselves to a serving of New York Strip, prepared by Sysco Lincoln’s in-house chef.



► **Above, left, below:** The group toured the labs at Geneseek, Lincoln, where millions of dollars worth of equipment process DNA samples that keep the industry progressing.

► **Below:** Tom Brink, senior vice president and chief risk officer of JBS Five Rivers Cattle Feeding LLC, led Wednesday afternoon’s session providing an industry perspective on feeders, consumers and beyond.

