

# Engler Honored by Feeding Quality Forums

by *Miranda Reiman*

**P**aul Engler, Cactus Feeders, was one of the first people to see the feeding potential in Texas. He was one of the first to develop value-based grid marketing. And now he is the inaugural recipient of the Industry Achievement Award, given in conjunction with the Feeding Quality Forums. This is the fifth year for the seminars, which are slated for Nov. 9 in Grand Island, Neb., and Nov. 11, in Amarillo, Texas.

“At the Feeding Quality Forums we really get the leaders and managers, the people who generate the tremendous quality beef products,” says Larry Corah, Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) vice president. “We wanted to utilize this forum to recognize folks who made contributions to this industry.”

Engler, a Stuart, Neb., native now living in Amarillo, has been making his mark on the feeding business for more than half a century. He is currently chairman of the board for Cactus Feeders, which he started in 1975. It has grown to become the largest privately held cattle feeding company in the world, with a 520,000-head capacity.

A cattle career for Engler started on a small scale when he bought his first animals at the age of 13. Whether it was working for Dinklage Feedyards or working with Iowa Beef Packers (IBP, now Tyson) to develop the first large-scale packing plant in Texas, his focus has always been bigger than just producing meat.

“People love beef,” Engler says. “That’s something we always want to think about. We want to be very careful that we continue to produce the very best that we possibly can so we’re always in that position.”

Engler will accept the award and make remarks during the noon *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> (CAB<sup>®</sup>) brand lunch in Amarillo, but both audiences are bound to be familiar with his legacy.

“He was one of the early leaders in the Corn Belt, but then became one of the early leaders in the Southern Plains as the cattle feeding industry developed there,” Corah says. “He literally evolved with the industry in the United States.”

Quality beef production really came to the forefront with grids and monetary incentives for producing it, Engler notes.

“We probably did more to establish value-based marketing than anyone had done in the past,” he says. “It was important to get the hide off the cattle and get the cattle graded and evaluated, so we actually got paid for what we produced.”

Looking to the future, Engler says it’ll be even more important for feedyards to develop arrangements with packers to supply specific programs that fit consumer demand. He predicts the shrinking national cow herd will cause some feeders to exit the business,

and animal rights groups will continue to cause challenges.

Although Brazil is a market force to watch, he says they aren’t poised to take this country’s claim to fame.

“No way can they compete with the United States in terms of producing Choice and Prime beef,” he says. “First, they don’t have the cow herd and genetics to produce those kind of cattle. Secondly, they don’t have the infrastructure right now to deliver the high-energy ration that is necessary for premium beef.”

Engler admits these are all just educated guesses, but he speaks from experience. It’s that history and knowledge base that forum organizers hope will inspire attendees.

“There are individuals who have had such an impact on our industry that they are leaders both within their own organizations and within the industry as a whole,” says Gary Sides, Pfizer cattle nutritionist. “From time to time we need to recognize them and show examples to younger folks in the business. Paul was a logical first choice.”

The meetings are sponsored by Pfizer Animal Health, Land O’ Lakes Purina Mills, *Feedlot* magazine and CAB.



**Editor’s Note:** *Miranda Reiman is assistant director of industry information for Certified Angus Beef LLC.*