



Tying It All Together

Cattle and chefs, bulls and Miami tie a farm-to-table story together.

Story & photo by *Laura Conaway*, Certified Angus Beef LLC

As summer makes its mark across the rest of the country, Florida has felt its warmth for a while now. Perhaps Miami hardly realized its absence.

The famous city is known for its blending of cultures and people, its warm air and ever-changing nature, but it can also be a bit set in its ways. It is hot, energetic, trendy and fast-paced.

Maybe that's why Miami was so taken by JD, the bull.

The executive team for the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand's largest distributor in the state was looking for something special to tie its Sysco South Florida farm-to-table story together — something that would catch the eyes of customers and keep them talking, something lasting and memorable.

What if an Angus bull could make an appearance at a Sysco food show in the metropolis that is Miami?

"We jumped on the opportunity," says Maggie O'Quinn, CAB executive account manager. "What better way to tell the story of our unique history, breed heritage and cattle production in the state of Florida?"

It helped many of the chefs, restaurant owners and operators in attendance tell that story to their customers. Guests were able to spend time with local Florida Angus ranchers,

observe the Angus bull and sample CAB product.

Julie Bracken, Sysco South Florida's vice president of customer resources, says the bull's presence increased the interest and opportunities for the beef industry and the CAB brand.

"JD was one of the highlights of our event and the most talked about," she says. "Several weeks after the event, people are still talking about the bull."

Willing ambassadors

For Zolfo Springs, Fla., rancher Roy Petteway, Petteway Citrus & Cattle, bringing the retired show bull to town was an easy choice.

"When you're involved in the agriculture industry, everyone is an ambassador," he says. "Any time that you get to talk, even if it's just to one person, it's incredible being able to tell them your story, to learn a little bit about them, to help them put a face to it and see how it works."

Peter Vauthy, CAB brand ambassador and executive chef at Miami's Red, The Steakhouse, says bringing the two ends of the production spectrum together is an on-target strategy.

"There's a trend where people want to hear a story behind a product," Vauthy says. "I like to know that I have the ability to track something back to the ranch, that I have a connection with the people involved in putting the steaks on my table."

Always amazed by the sheer size and


magnitude of cattle, Vauthy says it's the respect he has for the ranchers that stands out the most.

"They show a lot of love for their animals, and then on my end I show the same amount of care and dedication by the way the beef is aged and the way it's cooked," he shares. "It's a lot of respect — respect for something that's been treated with the utmost care from start to finish."

O'Quinn echoes those sentiments.

"So many people travel to that area, and their very first impression of our brand is made right there in a steak house in Miami," she says. "We have such an opportunity to tell our story, not only to customers in South Florida, but our customers from all over the world. For those international customers to come to the food show and meet with a rancher from right there, three hours north of Miami, it means everything for us as we grow our global brand presence."

The thousands of guests who made their way to the 2014 food show undoubtedly left with a special memory. Petteway hopes they gained a better understanding of Florida, too.

"Perhaps there's a lot of people who think there's beaches on one side and beaches on the other and nothing in the middle except Disney World," he says. "I think a lot of people forget that there is a great deal of land between the two sides of the state that produces a substantial amount of agriculture in its heartland." 

Editor's Note: *Laura Conaway is a public relations and industry information specialist for CAB.*

► **Above:** Zolfo Springs, Fla., rancher Roy Petteway, Petteway Citrus & Cattle, brought retired show bull JD to Miami for the Sysco food show and to promote the CAB brand.