



Brand News

► News and highlights from Certified Angus Beef LLC,* compiled by Laura Conaway, Certified Angus Beef LLC

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To order CAB merchandise, visit
<http://pos.certifiedangusbeef.com>.
For recipe ideas, storage and handling tips,
restaurant listings, retail store locations
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www.certifiedangusbeef.com.



73%-75% CAB lean grinds on the rise

Rarely the belle of the ball, ground beef is often an afterthought, but should it be? Still strong from the long upward price trends, ground beef sales remain a major player in overall beef fortunes. Combining foodservice and retail, the product often takes for granted accounts for up to 60% of all beef sold.

“It’s such a big part of our business. It’s the ripe fruit that needs picking,” says Randy Whittemore, Alabama-based executive account manager for the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand. Whittemore, kindly coined the “ground beef guy” within the CAB team, looked around the industry and noticed room for the brand to expand its variety of ground beef offerings. Subsequent conversations led to a 75/25 ground beef option and later a 73/27 going to market.

“We’ve talked for years about ‘signature grinds’ and that’s what CAB is anyway,” Whittemore says, “but the lowest lean point we had ever focused on was our No. 1 grind, the 80/20.”

With most of the large-volume merchandisers buying commodity grinds from the same major packers, Whittemore saw that the key was to differentiate.

“The meat grinder is no magic wand. You can’t just drop product in there and get quality,” he points out. “The type of lean and fat that goes in matters.”

Commodity grinds may end up with the same lean point, but Whittemore says how they get there can vary a great deal. Not so much with CAB.

“The quality specifications that carry the CAB brand, the same ones that make it different with whole-muscle cuts, also make it different with ground beef. It’s like your mother’s favorite pie: ingredients matter.”

They seem to sell, too. Just five months after the product was introduced in April 2015, one distributor had marketed nearly 1 million pounds (lb.).

Whittemore says the trend that perhaps gained its foothold in the Southeast is now making its mark across the country, mostly because of one key X factor.

“We know marbling is most important when it comes to beef flavor, and CAB dominates in the marbling category. Would you not want the trim from those cattle?” he asks. “If ground beef is the biggest part of your beef business, what makes you different than everybody else?”

More and more partners are trying on the glass slipper to find this CAB Cinderella.

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*Certified Angus Beef LLC is a wholly owned subsidiary of the American Angus Association.



CAB on *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*

The Hollywood spotlight was on quality beef once again as renowned author and barbecue master Adam Perry Lang visited *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* Dec. 10.

Just in time for Christmas, the seasoned chef and author of *Serious Barbecue*, with help from Kimmel himself, prepared a CAB brand prime rib holiday roast for the live studio audience.

Following his summer grilling tradition, Lang set up shop in the studio's back lot for six days in December, serving CAB boneless ribeye, boneless strip loin and plate short ribs for the public. All proceeds went to the charity LA Kitchen.

Meats lab expansion

To better accommodate the increasing number of visitors to CAB's Education & Culinary Center, the meat processing and cutting portion of the building has nearly doubled in size.

The 28 × 41-foot expansion off the building's east side includes one fabrication and two dry storage utility rooms in addition to a viewing area that allows guests to watch seminars in session without entering the cooler.

"The fabrication room alone gives us 50%

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Meanwhile at the ECC

Since its establishment in February 2012, the CAB Education & Culinary Center (ECC) has served as a unique gathering place. Partners in and outside of the beef industry are gaining insight into the brand and the quality beef that defines it.

From cattlemen to media guests and scientists to chefs, more than 225 groups have visited the Wooster, Ohio, venue from all parts of the world. This ECC column within Brand News will help keep producers current on recent events there.

- ▶ International Team Strategic Planning Meeting, Dec. 1
- ▶ Certified Angus Beef (CAB) Staff Meetings, Dec. 2-4
- ▶ Board Meeting, Dec. 15

Digital extras

Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) and the American Angus Association provide these video segments. Readers of our digital edition can click on the photo to launch the respective YouTube video. The url (www ...) for each video is also provided for our print edition readers.



Jared Decker, Extension geneticist at the University of Missouri, talks about new research looking at regional differences in cattle genetics with the aim of developing selection tools. Here's the clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-pcveXBrWo>.



Kansas cattle feeders Shawn and Shane Tiffany, Tiffany Cattle Co., work with retained ownership customers. Shane talks about how they provide feedback to spur improvements at the ranch. Here's the clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fIN2kyudePA>.



Brian McCulloh of Woodhill Farms, near Viroqua, Wis., talks about selecting the best genetics for your environment and herd goals. Here's the clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esdG-nzrJUS>.



John Stika, *Certified Angus Beef*® brand president, talks about how his company posted another sales record amidst challenging market conditions. Here's the clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTj6evS2xtY>.

more total square footage, and we have a cooler that is 10 by 20 feet devoted just to meat,” Phil Bass says.

CAB’s meat scientist explains that a continuous rail from the cooler to the fabrication room also allows for easier use and movement of the beef quarters as they go in and out for educational purposes.

“We’re functional and get a lot done with what we have, but the expansion is a real benefit,” Bass says, adding that the culinary team again has a dedicated prep area that had often been used for meats training.

Temperature control is another benefit of the new facility that has product looking better and lasting longer.



Distributor partner launches CAB PathProven®

Another step in the direction of beef supply chain transparency, Performance Foodservice expanded its CAB product line to include a selection with PathProven® assurance.

Guarantees go “beyond the specs” and build on CAB’s 10 quality standards to provide an additional story tied to the supply chain. Positioned as neither more safe nor superior, but simply another option, the product is built on attributes tied to traceability, as well as animal welfare and handling.

“This is the first time we’ve had a distributor go so far as to build a partnership all the way back to the feeding side and being able to carry that all the way through,” says CAB’s Mark McCully.

For ranchers supplying the brand, the CAB vice president of production says it is business as usual, but for consumers wanting to know more about the origins of their product and the people and places behind it, PathProven is a new option.

“From a brand-positioning standpoint, nothing has changed,” McCully assures. “It’s a reflection of the continuation of demand that’s out there with end users, specifically at the foodservice level.”

Currently available in a few U.S. markets, Performance Foodservice is working the

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Alyasra Foods & Sultanchef Restaurant host Certified Angus Beef® Cook-Off chef competition in Kuwait



Alyasra Foods & Sultanchef hosted Certified Angus Beef® Kuwait's second annual Certified Angus Beef® Brand Cook-Off Kuwait chef competition. This event took place on Wednesday, December 18 at Sultanchef restaurant in Light Complex in Abu Dhabi, which is managed and operated by Kuwaiti Turkish Company for Catering & Restaurant. Sponsored by Sultanchef restaurant, Dubai restaurant, Greater Omaha and the Certified Angus Beef® Brand, this great event featured, introduced and promoted the Certified Angus Beef® Brand throughout Kuwait by having a fun chef "Cook-Off" competition using the brand products in their recipes. Rounds included salad, appetizer and main course, where participants were split into groups of four. The competition began with Mr. Gibran Chahine, the Marketing Manager of Alyasra Foods, welcoming guests, chefs, visitors and all persons of Alyasra Foods to the Cook-Off. After wishing his welcome, he

participating chefs took their places and started with the first round, using ribeye in a total of 20 minutes. The second round was known as the appetizer round using ground beef in a total of 20 minutes and third round was known as the main course round using tenderloin beef in a total of 20 minutes. After the rounds were complete, all participating chefs lined up to be assessed by a panel of judges that included Mr. Mohammad Naita, Secretary General of Kuwait Hotel Owners Association – KHOA, Chef Tony Higgs, Director of Culinary Arts from the Certified Angus Beef® Brand and Mr. Antonio Lopez, the International Account Executive, Manager of the Certified Angus Beef® Brand. Chefs were judged on hygiene, plate presentation, technique, creativity, flavor, time management, completion, size of portion of goods, consistency of the meat, temperature and of course taste. All participating chefs were given a variety of gifts from Certified Angus Beef® Brand for their excellent efforts and skills.

Executive Chef Tapan Choksi (Sultanchef Restaurant)
 Executive Executive Chef AB Tahaoui from Mubala Kuwait (Wahatouna, Living Colors, Café Hana, Cooper & Sautter's)
 Executive Chef Hani Al-Said (Hafidha Inn Salalah)
 Executive Chef Abdul Kader Yaman (Hilton Hotel Kuwait)

This event welcomed many notable guests, chefs and their teams from hotels, restaurants,



Chef competition in Kuwait

The second *Certified Angus Beef®* (CAB®) Cook-Off Kuwait chef competition was the focal point of further education for partners in the Middle East last fall.

Sponsored by Dadas restaurant, Greater Omaha Packing and Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB), the Nov. 18 event featured four culinary teams from the area competing in three rounds. The winner, Executive Chef Abdul Kader, who led the Hilton Resort Kuwait team, was awarded travel to the United States to take part in the brand’s International Chef Tour.

Press surrounding the event that entertained more than 100 reached new heights with stories published next to those featuring Charles, Prince of Wales.

Speaking of 2015 international events, Brandy Erwin, CAB assistant director of international marketing, says budget planning aims to increase sales in a growing market while building strong relationships with partners in those areas.

“The opportunity for our winner to attend our Chef Tour is significant,” Erwin says. “We see their commitment to the brand, and they get to see how the production side works.”

That helps elevate the production story so well-received by partners in the Middle East and elsewhere, “so they can better communicate it to their own customers.”

In 2015, Kuwait ranked seventh as a CAB international sales area.

After the cook-off, more days were spent in Jordan holding educational seminars and staff training sessions with CAB distribution partners.



line into all five of its licensed locations, increasing product availability.

Numbers mean cake

Who really needs an excuse to party? More than numbers get recognized at CAB, but that doesn't mean a numerical jump isn't worth a celebratory cake or two. Launched at annual conference, CAB's Roast Perfect app experienced its highest download day in December with 13,200 downloads and counting. Implementing a new ad buy system, total downloads for the consumer app reached 25,259 just before the Christmas holiday.

What's more, the target set to reach 10,000 CertifiedAngusBeef Instagram followers was achieved weeks before the year-end goal and, as of Dec. 15, the @BlackInkBasics twitter handle achieved exponential growth, totaling an audience of 8,651.

Be sure to follow these social media handles to keep up with the most up-to-date information on the brand.



The buzz continues to build around the CAB brand's Roast Perfect smartphone app, driving consumer confidence and sales of beef roasts by licensed retailers this holiday season. In addition to many media clips in your marketplaces, Chef Michael Ollier highlighted the app and roasting tips to a national audience on Fox & Friends Weekend show this Christmas season.



Story behind the numbers: 36.8 million

Where were you when beef prices dropped? More than the location, you likely recall what it felt like when the reward level so easy to accept suddenly took a tumble. Thankfully, with opportunities still intact for CAB and other quality premiums, as well as solid consumer demand, there are plenty of reasons to continue raising the best beef.

As prices dropped for ranchers, so did those for CAB retail and foodservice partners, which led to a huge sigh of relief as they'd worked diligently to promote beef sales amid record-high costs. It's a different side of the business, sure, but all led by the goal of furthering the demand for Angus cattle.

Perhaps you've heard industry chatter along these lines: "The retailers sure haven't responded to the lower beef prices."

Oh, to the contrary. There are even numbers to prove it: 36.8 million. That's how many pounds of CAB product sold through its retail division in October 2015. That's an 8.4-million-lb. (29.5%) increase compared to October 2014.

That was during National Pork Month, but who's counting theirs? As director of business development and analysis for the brand, Steve Ringle tracks how many and what type of ad features retail partners put in their weekly circulars.

Looking at front-page ad activity in October 2014 compared to 2015, Ringle says the number of CAB items featured increased from 73 to 109. That's growth simply driven by the market and retail strategies, because ad placement in circulars isn't funded by CAB.

In 2014, only five of those were in what CAB refers to as the "sweet spot" — ad features listed with a price of \$2.99 or lower and/or a special deal such as a buy-one-get-one offer. In 2015, that number jumped to 19.

"We can attribute our increase in sales not only to the number of features we saw for October, but also the quality of those features," Ringle says.

That leads back to the decrease in beef prices on the ranch end of the chain. Ringle says the two are directly related.

"As the market softens, so does everything else. Boxed-beef prices begin to decline and our retail-licensee base has responded. From middle meats to ends and grinds, it's all the way across the board."

Check back next month for another story behind the numbers.

Editor's Note: Laura Conaway is producer communications specialist for CAB.



Ever daydream about life on the other side of the beef world? Follow CertifiedAngusBeef on Instagram and you're likely to get a glimpse of the happenings of CAB brand ambassadors like Jeremiah Bacon. During his #cheftakeover, the Charleston chef took a behind-the-scenes approach by revealing important ingredients and steps when preparing a delicious meal for many!