



Brand News

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

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Ringling the bell

“That’s our goal. We want to ring the bell.”

For Tom and Seane Jones, Claypool, Okla., “ringing the bell” has always been the objective. Before Oklahoma was a state, Seane’s grandfather ran an extensive cattle operation in its southern ranges, some of which would be settled as the towns of Ringling and Claypool.

Three generations later, they and daughter Sidney raise Angus cattle on that same land.

“My daughter will be the fourth generation operating the ranch,” Seane says. “We look forward to doing it as long as we can. Forever.”

A Nebraska native, Tom wasn’t born into the ranching life, but Seane says he was “a very quick study.” The pair met on the racetrack, where she worked as a horse trainer. Soon their interest turned to high-quality cattle.

A shared passion for the outdoors and working for themselves led to an eventual move back to the grassroots, where they took over the family business. The Joneses own the western part of the ranch, while Seane’s mom still includes a racehorse enterprise on the east-side operation.

Setting up as a commercial-Angus operation has been “something of a transition,” Seane says. Her grandfather was a Hereford man who liked the idea of crossbreeding, yet she still recalls the first Angus cattle her dad brought home. She especially remembers their individual identification (ID) in those days before ID tags: They had little chains with numbers around their necks.

Following conventional wisdom, she expected to like the idea of crossbreeding, too. Instead, she grew to like the idea of learning from doing. The Joneses purchased two sets of cattle — first a group of Angus, then a crossbred herd aimed for performance.

“I thought the crossbreds would do better because of the terminal influence,” Seane says. “But the straight Angus have and continue to outperform any crosses I have ever had.”

Docility, maternal characteristics and soundness were all traits she wanted and found. That wasn’t all she was looking for in the beef genetics for her herd.

“I’ve been asked what I select for, and have been known to say, ‘I’m a woman, I want it all,’” Seane says with a laugh. “I want growth, I want carcass, and I want feed efficiency. I want the fertility. Everything comes into play.”

Indeed, there is little she won’t do to improve the herd.

“We are primarily commercial, but we value our cows so much that we use Certified Angus Beef LLC’s (CAB’s) GeneMax™ (GMX) extensively every time the calves are born,” she says. “If it looks good and it has a 5 and a 5 [for gain and grade potential] and

a 99 [GMX Score], then we’re ringing the bell. That’s the kind of cow we want in the herd.”

“We try to cull anything below an 80 on our total score,” she adds. “I feel like it makes our herd stronger.”

Mostly in the business of selling replacement heifers to repeat customers, the family has sent calves to a feedyard a time or two and found 80% of steers hit the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand premium target.

They would like to feed more and track the data back to their cows and bulls, but it can be hard to find enough steers for a load.

“We’re getting requests for our heifers, which is a nice situation to be in,” Seane says. “It’s hard to mess up when you have the right genetics.”

Experiencing the effects of long-term drought and grass shortage like many of her neighbors to the west, she still stresses the importance of raising quality cattle on limited resources, to make sure the consumer enjoys every eating experience and doesn’t turn to another protein choice.

“It’s on us to make sure we produce the very best we can,” Seane says. “There’s no reason, in today’s environment, why anyone would want to raise mediocre cattle when you have all the tools to raise really good cattle.”

Those are the kind that “ring the bell” for everyone, including the dinner bell.

Beef science, CAB style

School can be tough, but once immersed in the daily demands of the “real world,” many people actually miss the structured learning environment. Maybe that’s the case in some foodservice distribution houses where the



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

CAB brand is bringing school back, along with the fun of fog machines and music.

“The macro goal with meat labs is intensive education for foodservice distributors’ sales teams,” says Amanda Wydner, executive account manager for CAB. “We need for the people making the final sale to share an allegiance to and passion for our brand that transcends price objections, the Angus confusion in the marketplace and overall miscommunication about the beef industry.”

Such daunting challenges seem best addressed by taking over a monthly sales meeting at some CAB-partner houses. The idea is to build knowledge about product specifications, create a better understanding of cuts and share merchandising methods for menus, for starters.

“One important underlying objective is to emotionally engage our partners,” Wydner says. “By doing that, we evoke passion, commitment and loyalty to our brand, and it becomes more than a box in their warehouse.”

Feedback says the labs are definitely engaging. CAB “professors” have been known to get participants in the spirit by passing out lab coats, gloves and binders.

“It’s a little bit of theater, a traveling roadshow of sorts,” says Kelly Murray, CAB assistant director of foodservice marketing who was once on the Sysco side of the room as a sales professional.

“We’ll start sessions with ‘Open up your lab books, and here we go ...’ There’s something for everybody; just a different way of learning,” Murray adds. “For salespeople, the protein category as a whole can be very intimidating, especially for our broadline distributors, who are selling everything from mayonnaise to green beans. This just gives them a comfort level, a point of reference. It’s memorable, not a PowerPoint presentation.”

Typical classes of 100-150 “students” include four core sessions on the chuck, round, loin and “Making the Grade.” That one puts sales people in the shoes of USDA graders to determine whether or not a cut meets all 10 CAB specifications. Participants go about reassembling the side of beef to learn the specifications, rather than simply memorizing them.

With eight classes under their belts — engaging other CAB staffers such as David MacVane, assistant vice president for business development, and meat scientist Phil Bass — sales appear to have increased in the educated houses.

“For the salespeople to have fun and learn in the process is huge,” Murray says. “To garner their attention and then provide them with tools they can utilize to sell — that’s what makes these labs a success, a real win-win for everyone.”

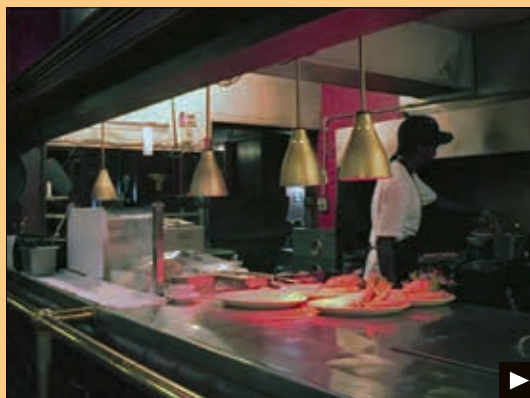
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Digital extras

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.



Scott Greiner, Virginia Tech Extension animal scientist, recently co-authored a research review that looked at the relationship between marbling and maternal function. Here’s the clip: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rk_b33A0Cu0.



John Paterson, National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, talks about what today’s beef consumers want and why cattlemen should pay attention. Here’s the clip: www.youtube.com/watch?v=496HYaPYnKg.



Steve Paisley, Wyoming Extension beef specialist, talks about the opportunities that exist for cattlemen aiming to please a growing consumer base. Here’s the clip: www.youtube.com/watch?v=SaEzJ9KjOn4.



Nebraska farmer Mark Jagels chairs the U.S. Meat Export Federation. He discusses the beef export scene, including market development and what kind of beef the global trade requires. Here’s the clip: www.youtube.com/watch?v=48e1AFLD-U4.

Texans host Saltgrass event

It's no secret that consumers like to know where their food comes from. So do those who prepare and serve it.

Linking arms along the supply chain, CAB staffers joined 80 team members from longtime partner Saltgrass Steakhouse to gather at Bodey Langford's ranch near Lockhart, Texas, for a day of learning and camaraderie.

The Texas Angus Association (TAA) past president hosted folks from the award-winning steak house to celebrate those many



years of working with CAB, applaud the Saltgrass staff for their hard work and further educate them about the brand and beef production.

CAB meeting planner Danielle Foster said the daylong training kicked off with a brand overview, followed by rotations that covered topics from genetics and prediction tools to feedstuffs and sustainability.

Gary Fike, beef cattle specialist for the brand, led an interactive seminar on genetic testing and its "ability to increase the reliability of the EPDs (expected progeny differences)." Fike asked participants to compare two bulls from a phenotypic standpoint and then look at their respective data in order to rank calves they sired.

"You just can't begin to imagine the impact," he said later. "It was very well-received."

Equally rewarding was interaction with the dozen TAA members in attendance, according to Fike and CAB staffer Kelly Murray.

"Their stories were great. Hearing it firsthand, it just changes how you feel about things," Murray said. "These guys live it every day, and they are sharing their stories and



answering any and every question. There was a lot of interaction and engagement. I think it was a home run."

Saltgrass executive chef and friend of the brand Ric Rosser met with the cattlemen, as well and prepared a delicious barbecue for all.

"This is such a great event because it allows us to educate our younger managers on what happens before this product ever comes in our back door," he said.

The quintessential cowboy cookery with locations in five states, Saltgrass is known for blending the latest food trends with tried-and-true western flavors. Respected from foodies and cattlemen alike, the Texas-based restaurant draws in consumers from all parts of the country.

"We're educating them on the other end of the spectrum. What happens to beef before

it's a steak? To be able to show them the real, live animal and talk to the people who raise them, you can't quantify that," Rosser said. "These ranchers have so much passion about what they do and how they raise these animals. We hope our managers share that passion and bring it back to Saltgrass."

Current TAA president Rayford Pullen, Bellevue, Texas, works to help bridge the gap between those raising the beef and those selling it. He called the day an "irreplaceable" experience.

"One on one, face to face is still the best way to conduct business. When you put a face with a name and have the same enthusiasm for the brand, it makes you realize not only the commitment these folks have for our product, but you also feel the enthusiasm," Pullen said. "Producer-consumer relations are one of the primary keys for a profitable future."

Growing market in Japan

With more than a decade of a volatile international beef market now history, the



► A CAB team traveled to Japan in March to host a brand seminar for current and potential licensees with partner Tokyo American Club.

CAB brand future in Japan looks promising.

March saw a team from CAB travel to The Land of the Rising Sun to meet with partner Tokyo American Club and host a brand seminar for current and potential licensees.

Geof Bednar, CAB International Division director, says it was the first step of many in reestablishing the brand in Japan.

"It's been a little over a year that U.S. beef has had increased access to the Japanese market," he said. "It's gone from all boneless product to bone-in, as well as 30-months-and-younger. This was the first reintroduction of bone-in CAB product into the market."

Today, CAB cuts have the opportunity to reach a wider population. Staff spent time with current brand partners and identified future licensees in an attempt to ensure product that meets CAB specifications is marketed as such.

"There's a lot of layers to identify. If the licensee structure and relationship isn't in place, the product can lose its identity as

Cattle Drive competition drives sales

When it comes to the life of a cowboy, it's not just those raised in the country who have an appreciation for what ranchers do each day. FSA Portland, a Northwest distributor for the brand, recently launched a CAB sales promotion with a ranch day as the main prize.

The company's "Cattle Drive" competition among sales staff ran March through May, with the top team awarded a trip to an Angus ranch. As of April 4, CAB sales for the top 20 sales associates were reported up 60%. Passion for the farms and ranches, the live side of the industry, continues to grow and drive demand.



CAB," Bednar said. "This was really about increasing brand awareness across the entire industry."

So how does the market differ from what it looked like when CAB first sold there in 1988?

"Pre-BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy), the U.S. enjoyed the greater percentage of the total market share," Bednar said. "Today, in addition to Angus confusion, there is confusion around country of origin. There's a multitude of different countries competing, as well as commodity brands."

Leading up to 2003 and international trade disruption, the brand's best year with the country was 2001, when 58 million pounds (lb.) were exported and Japan made up 67% of CAB international sales. In 2013, Japan represented 10 million lb. sold, only

9% of total international sales. However, 2014 figures show an upward slant representative of increasing demand.

"For the first six months of the 2014 CAB fiscal year, Japan is up 54%," Bednar said. "We've got a long ways to go, but we are reestablishing our market presence."

Not only is demand on the rise, but consumers there are reconnecting with an American icon, said Emily Depompei, CAB assistant director for international marketing.

"I think they are curious about our industry and the people who raise and work with cattle," she said. "The glamorous Western cowboy theme is very intriguing."

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

Table 1: Targeting the Brand Honor Roll

Targeting the Brand Honor Roll is a report for *Angus Journal* and other media to highlight groups of at least 30 cattle harvested by CAB Feeding Partners that are at least 40% *Certified Angus Beef*[®] (CAB[®]) and Prime with 10% or fewer "out" cattle [heavy or light carcasses and Yield Grade (YG) 4] and 0% no-rolls, Standard or A grades, dark cutters or YG 5s.

At least half of the cattle in a group must be eligible for CAB (>51% black-hided). Groups that meet the 40% criteria but fall short in other areas may be listed as an Honorable Mention.

Previously known as the "30.06" program (for 30% CAB and Prime with 6% "outs"), this feature has been adjusted to reflect a higher percentage of cattle qualifying for CAB in the marketplace and tolerance of a trigger level of outs on some grids.

Licensed CAB Feedlot	Sex	Head	%CAB	%Prime	% YG1&YG2	% YG 3
Targeting the Brand Honor Roll						
Chappell Feedlot	H	62	54.72	0.00	30.65	62.90
McPherson County Feeders Inc.	H	74	51.85	9.46	39.19	56.76
Honorable mentions						
Beller Feedlot	S	82*	59.76	7.32	26.83	60.98
Ford County Feed Yard Inc.	H	63	46.94	1.59	42.86	46.03
McPherson County Feeders Inc.	M	69	44.23	0.00	59.42	36.23
McPherson County Feeders Inc.	H	101	43.18	1.98	62.38	29.70

*H=heifers; M=mixed; S=steers.

*Indicates 100% CAB eligible. All acceptance rates figured on eligible portions.

(Lots that exceed 15% Yield Grade 4 & 5 are eliminated from the honorable mention lists.)

Call 785-539-0123 or visit www.cabfeedlots.com for a complete and current list of feedlot licensees.

