



Brand News

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

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For recipe ideas, storage and handling tips,
restaurant listings, retail store locations
and cooking information, visit
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Chefs visit the Beef State

“I have to go home and think of more things to do with *Certified Angus Beef*[®] (CAB[®]), more ways to use it.”

That statement from Chef David Kocob, of Trentina, a high-end Italian restaurant in Cleveland, Ohio, says the strategy behind the brand’s Chef Tour is working.

Kocob said it while eating a chuckwagon supper on the Lienemann family farm near Princeton, Neb. Just prior, he’d taken a pasture tour and talked about everything from expected progeny differences (EPDs) and artificial insemination (AI) to what the cows eat all winter. The whole Nebraska-based experience was designed to give the 50 chefs confidence in the beef they serve their customers, to show them the commitment and intentionality at every stop from seedstock supplier through harvest.

CAB has hosted the Chef Tour for six years and taken 350 of these professional foodies on many journeys from Texas and Colorado to Kansas and Nebraska, all in the name of building trust.

Kocob says it has done that, and inspires him to want to hold up his end of the beef business bargain.

“[Cattlemen] have spent all this time raising it to the perfect state,” the chef says. “Now it’s almost on us as stewards to give customers something with the same flavor profile, but an entirely different delivery.”

From one coast to another

The life of a Sysco CAB specialist can have its perks. From sampling new products to fine dining with culinary masters, it’s a coveted role — that is, if you’re awake to enjoy it.

Rob Crook, CAB specialist for Sysco South Florida, spent the early morning of May 10 on a ranch. Nestled among the orange groves of Petteway Citrus & Cattle, Zolfo Springs, Fla., Crook joined CAB staffers and the Petteway family in welcoming 35 south Florida restaurateurs to experience the other side of the beef business — the one that

happens before they apply their skills to the product.

For some it was an experience of a lifetime, for others their first time seeing a cow up close. No matter the understanding when they set foot on the ranch, the end goal was the same: to understand the ranchers behind the brand and the commitment they hold to bring quality products to consumers’ tables.

Three days later, Crook stood in front of a mobile meat lab — this time in Spokane, Wash., as a part of a Sysco sales training for

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90. He shared recent experiences and assisted with a carcass presentation by “Dr. Phil” Bass, CAB meat scientist. Meanwhile, the Sysco customers enjoyed a meat and butchery event at nearby Northern Quest Resort and Casino where celebrity entertainers Penn & Teller, who performed the next night, competed with the popularity of the beef carcass display.

“The events were interactive and enlightening for our attendees,” Crook said. “From one coast to another, it was a success on all fronts.”

Canada chain sees success with CAB

A top Canadian-based account is expanding its menu to include more CAB

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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.

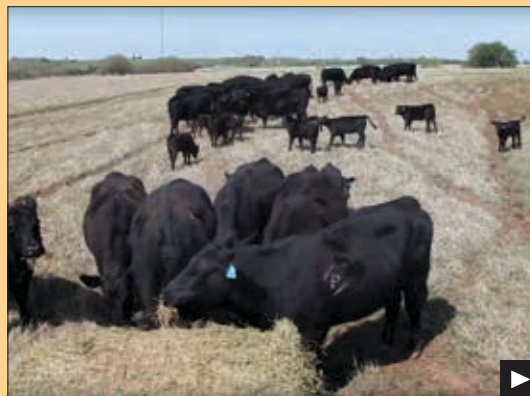
- ▶ JP Farley, May 4
- ▶ Sysco Intermountain, May 9-11
- ▶ Kentucky Angus Ass’n, May 14
- ▶ Sysco Cleveland, May 16
- ▶ Int’l Roundup, May 17-19
- ▶ Bahamas Food Service, May 23-25
- ▶ Sysco South Florida & Chambou, May 25-26
- ▶ Weis Markets, May 25

Digital extras

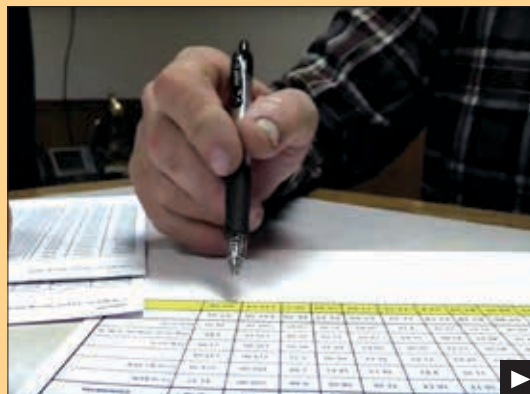
Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) and the American Angus Association provide these video segments. Readers of our digital edition can click on the photo to launch the respective YouTube video. The url (www ...) for each video is also provided for our print edition readers.



John Schroeder manages Darr Feedlot in south-central Nebraska, and talks about the team approach to creating quality beef. Here’s the clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwnZwwTlwQw>.



Mark Hilton, clinical professor of beef production medicine at Purdue’s College of Veterinary Medicine, Lafayette, Ind., says a well-planned health protocol adds dollars to a producer’s bottom line. Here’s the clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXfqQ4J2IbY>.



Sandy Johnson, Kansas State University Extension livestock specialist, describes a web-based tool cattlemen can use to manage many aspects of herd planning. Here’s the clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezQUWP01Ng4>.



Ag economist Ted Schroeder, of Kansas State University, discusses how premiums filter back from beef consumer to beef producer. Here’s the clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1v_GFxlLHA0.

products, all the while experiencing significant growth as it moves further into the United States.

The first location of Joey Restaurant Group opened in 1992, and in the years since expanded into four Canadian provinces before making its way into Washington, and most recently, California.

In the chain-driven market that is Canada, Joey finds its place as upscale, casual dining. With upbeat music and modern amenities, the atmosphere and food that found success in the north proved a good fit for the newest Woodland Hills, Calif., location. In a few short months, sales numbers are outpacing even the highest-grossing store in Canada.

That's according to Heidi Schroeder, executive account manager for CAB in the Northwest region. A menu expansion added a "Butcher's Sandwich" of bottom round flat, moved all burgers up to CAB and jumped sirloins up to CAB brand Prime.

Diverse, a Joey's menu offers a global dining experience for customers. For cattlemen supplying the product, Schroeder says it's equally rewarding.

"To have such a significant partner expand not only their locations but their menu as



well — with the CAB bottom round flat and burgers, this gives the brand and the cattlemen supporting it more utilization of cuts, and adds more value to a CAB carcass," she says.

With 15 years of history, the brand continues as the cornerstone for beef on the menu. Schroeder says it will also take part by request in the Joey Summit in Kelowna, B.C., Canada. The August event set in the Okanagan Valley will bring together key leadership across the United States and Canada.

"We'll be putting on a dinner for their key leadership," Schroeder says. "Focused on heritage, we plan to bring the ranch to them. It's amazing to be asked to be a part of it."

III Forks chefs compete at ECC

CAB chefs may have met their match as head chefs from each location of III Forks made their way to the brand's Education & Culinary Center (ECC) in April. The high-end, exclusive dining establishment brought all of its chefs together — some for the first

time — in Wooster, Ohio, to become better acquainted with the brand and take part in some friendly competition.

Sara Scott, CAB executive account manager, says the restaurant group that originated in Dallas was seeking information about the beef industry and carcass fabrication, as well as looking at different cuts and menu ideas.

“They are a little unique, compared to typical chain-type restaurants, because they don’t have a corporate chef,” Scott says. “They rely on the individual unit to submit ideas for menu changes.”

That menu features CAB brand Prime, USDA Prime and Wagyu. Dry-aged beef is featured on the menu, too.

It’s a goal, Scott says, to appeal to a wide group of people while maintaining the highest level of quality across all food categories.

To keep their ideas flowing, teams of two paired with the CAB chefs for a mystery basket competition. Each basket had a different group of ingredients that had to be used for an entrée and appetizer.

“There’s a level of talent these chefs bring to the table,” Scott says. “The neat thing was I think they challenged our chefs, as well.”

Texas A&M teaches CAB

As long as John Seibert is a professor at Texas A&M University, CAB will hold a spot on his lesson plans. Walk along the halls of an animal science wing and it may not be a surprise to hear the brand mentioned, but the professor of ag economics makes sure its conversations carry into the world of business.

“CAB empowers participants to sustainably make more net income. This is the most difficult thing to do in all of agriculture,” Seibert told his class of 250.

“Everything that this brand is based on is determined by the value we create in your minds, or the minds of consumers,” CAB President John Stika said at the debut of this lesson plan a few years ago. He shared the brand’s business plan with eager students: “Whether they’re at foodservice or retail, it’s the trust that they have that this brand is going to deliver beyond expectations for taste and quality.”

Since then and going forward, Seibert strives to bring in real-life parts of the economic chain that is beef production. From seedstock producers to commercial cattlemen, meat purveyors and restaurant owners, he teaches that it takes all doing their part to keep customers satisfied.

“My dad said anyone can sell something once. It’s selling something multiple times to the same person that takes a lot of work and expertise,” Seibert says.

Story behind the numbers: 40%

There are only two tenderloins on a beef animal. Steaks that are known as “middle meats” make up just 12% of the total carcass.

That is to say, not everybody can sell filet mignons. That’s okay with John Soules Jr., of John Soules Foods, in Tyler, Texas.

Since 1975 his family company has made its niche selling value-added products (VAP), making fajita meat out of undervalued cuts.

Don’t try to tell Soules that the inside skirt, the sirloin flap, and pectoral and lifter meat might not have the same flashy appeal as a rib or strip loin, because he might not care.

At last year’s annual conference, CAB President John Stika addressed the crowd and shared that the VAP category represented 3% of total brand sales and has grown seven out of the last 10 years. It had the second-best year in history.

CAB brand marinated fajita meat led the way again, growing by almost 40% in 2015.

Had fajitas become the “next big thing?” Surely, there was a story.

Soules confirmed that in four years of selling CAB, marinated fajita meat sales went from zero to around 3 million pounds, but said it’s more about the flexibility of the product than a new trend.

“It has a very neutral flavor profile, so it can be used in a lot of different places,” he said.

Even more, the success of the fajita meat category is shared with the cattlemen and women who target CAB.

“We appreciate the time and work that ranchers put into raising cattle,” Soules said.

“From my end, you can’t impart quality. You have to buy the raw material and hope to enhance it,” noting that the consistency is something that creates satisfied customers who return.

CAB isn’t simply a middle-meat company. Approximately half of the carcass value comes from the end meats, and a few cents a pound on a growing category is a net positive for everyone.

“You’re only going to sell ribeyes and strips to steak houses, and there are center-of-the-plate items a lot of other places,” he says. “You want to capture that center of the plate in many different channels.”

