



Brand News

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

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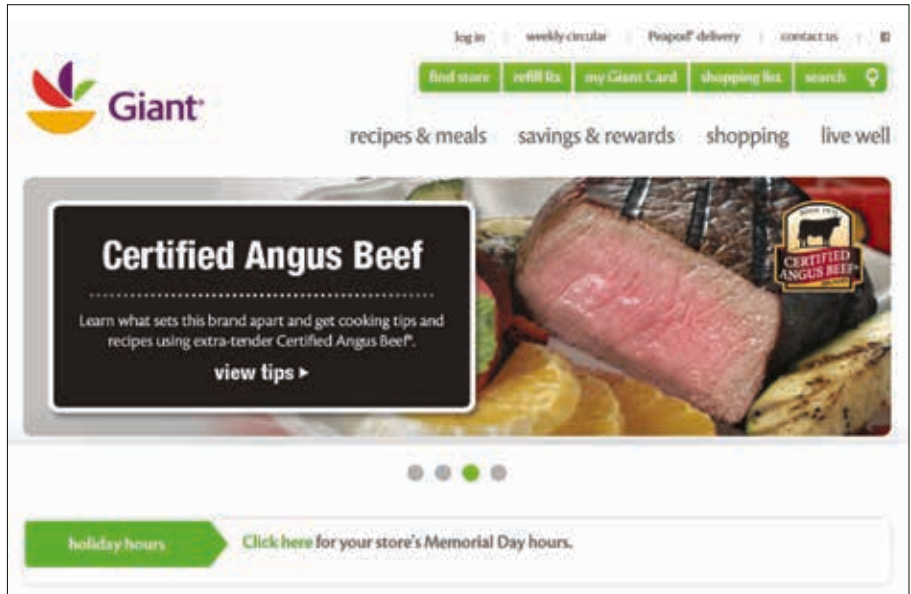
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Strategy boosts retail sales

Parent company to some of the largest retail stores in the Northeast, Ahold USA recently set out to test specific store markets to find out how to remain competitive in today's economy while continuing to supply quality protein. The possible answer: drop Choice and offer customers the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand and USDA Select.

To increase their focus on CAB, certain stores did just that. Stretching the quality threshold provided a lower-cost alternative while CAB cuts remained the premium product available — a scenario other retailers are beginning to consider.

"Those tests went really well," says Christy Johnson, Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) director of advertising and promotions. "In fact, they increased their percentage of CAB sales by around 300%."

Following initial success, Ahold USA expanded the test and brought more stores into that fold.

"I think they're seeing some good numbers, and certainly we are from a CAB perspective," Johnson says, noting the increase in pounds sold. "Hopefully they're not only seeing an increase in sales, but also doing well from a profitability aspect."

Besides that change in available product, CAB staffers and store representatives worked together on seven-week in-store promotions. Website prominence, in-

store advertisements and product tasting increased, along with radio features and meat department contests to drive excitement for the sales.

"We've been able to do multiple things with a very large footprint," Johnson says. "We're impacting a huge store count when you look at more than 700 stores under the Ahold USA banners."

During and after the promotion, ongoing analyses determine the effectiveness of the changes and whether to plan another promotion in the fall, centered on back-to-school and football tailgating.

What is the highlight of this opportunity?

"We're not just inside a retailer, but inside the No. 1 retailer in those strong metropolitan areas," Johnson says. "I think we have a nice presence and hopefully we will continue to improve it. Everyone is committed to making it work."

Chefs tour wheat state

Just as summer's first month set in, a group of 35 chefs flew to Kansas from the four corners of the United States and Canada. They stepped out of their kitchens and into the pastures as part of CAB's fourth Chef Tour.

Designed to integrate two groups that rarely find time to cross paths, the tour series provides in-depth learning by experiencing the beef industry.

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



▶ Beginning with a visit to Stucky Ranch near Kingman, Kan., the culinary leaders learned about genetics and the advancement of technology in today's industry.

"These guys get a whole new appreciation when they see how much farmers and ranchers really care," says Bryan Schaaf, media and communications manager for the brand. "A lot of them have been cooking steaks for 30 years but have never been on a farm or seen a cow."

With past tours taking place in Denver and Amarillo, Schaaf said heading to Kansas this year opened up new opportunities and places to see from Wichita to Dodge City.

Beginning with a visit to Stucky Ranch near Kingman, Kan., the culinary leaders learned about genetics and the advancement of technology in today's industry. As cattle grazed under shade trees, the chefs enjoyed 22-oz. ribeye cowboy steaks, beans and bread pudding, all prepared using cast-iron over an open flame.

Heading west, they stopped at Pratt Feeders near the town of that name, before ending the tour with a visit to the National Beef packing plant in Dodge City, among the largest suppliers of CAB product.

Brand Ambassador and renowned Cleveland chef Shawn Cline saw the value in "reaching across the table," communicating with and learning from the people who supply quality beef.

"The care that's taken and the passion that's involved on their end, it resonates with you," he says. "It filled in so many gaps for me

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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.



Frank Hinkson is a seedstock producer from Cottonwood Falls, Kan., who has noticed an upward trend in customers looking for more docility in their cattle herds. Knowing that genetics plays a role, he added disposition to his list of culling factors and began selecting to include more docility. Here's the clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkPpVolcOds>.



Mark McCully, *Certified Angus Beef*® brand vice president of supply, talks about a recent milestone and what it means for all cattle producers. Here's the clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2yk8XN3nTaY>.



Neal Haverkamp, manager of Nemaha Valley Angus, and Anne Lampe, manager of the Kansas Angus Association, share how the Kansas Carcass Data Project is helping producers through a partnership with Certified Angus Beef LLC. Here's the clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pn2CfXkXPpk>.



Mike Molitor, Zenda, Kan., seedstock producer, shares all the ways his customers market calves and how carcass quality matters regardless. Here's the clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1I6TAQOeKM>.

about what happens along the way. You come back and you can't wait to talk about it."

Cline didn't grow up on a farm, but he knows quality when he sees it.

"As a chef, you're always wanting to search out the highest-quality product. It's about setting yourself apart. We're serving something that has raised that level of consistency for us and decreased or removed that margin of error. It's something to talk about. Everybody benefits from it."

Schaaf grew up around cattle and yet was still affected by the trip.

"To hear them talk about the impact it made on them; they get it," he says. "They've seen it, and they're believers because they have seen it for themselves."

Success in the flesh

Abundant in rich soil and row crops, the north-central Ohio town of Ashland sees its fair share of Angus cattle. Ashland is also the home of a unique packer: Compared to the larger industry plants in the West, family-owned and CAB-licensed E.R. Boliantz Packing Co. offers a different view to the folks who walk through its doors.

Recently, a group of 22 high schoolers visited the plant and walked out with a brighter perspective of the industry they love.

Accompanied by CAB meat scientist Phil Bass, the local tech class toured the plant and took a close look at the carcass results of cattle they fed while enrolled in their high school course.

"They have already chosen to have a career in agriculture, so it's just really neat to see such a young group of folks with determination, ready to go in and grow the



► Accompanied by CAB meat scientist Phil Bass, a group of 22 high schoolers toured family-owned and CAB-licensed E.R. Boliantz Packing Co. and took a close look at the carcass results of cattle they fed while enrolled in their high school course.



agricultural community," Bass said.

After exploring the live side, students made their way to the cooler to see if their own animals met CAB's specifications.

"We started out looking at the harvest process," Bass said. "We explained everything that goes on, all of the food-safety measures and humane-handling things, all the steps that it takes to turn a live animal into a carcass."

More than the fun, more than the camaraderie was the honor of educating the future generation, he added.

"I love visiting with students who don't realize all the different avenues that you can take with an animal science or agriculture background," Bass said. "You can go into food science or the production side. It's more than just being a veterinarian."

Amid the rows of carcasses, students were engaged, willing and ready to listen and learn. Challenged with stumping Bass, they asked their fair share of questions, from "What do packers do with the udders" to "How many cuts of meat come off of each animal."

Did any students want to follow in his footsteps? The meat scientist said many were indeed inquiring about which colleges to attend.

The tour ended in the fabrication room where sides were broken down into primals and subprimals.

A believer in genetics

Jem Kjerstad knows good cattle. Beginning in the mid 1980s, he and his father fed a lot of them through their finishing yard near Quinn, S.D. So, when the Kjerstad Cattle Co. feeder decided it was time to get back into calf production, he knew what he wanted in his herd.

"In 2007 I could see the pendulum really swinging, cow numbers getting so short, so we converted," he says. "We've finished a lot of good cattle through the years, so I was



very familiar with what I needed. I'd seen a lot."

He and wife Kelly now manage 1,500 commercial cows on the land that's been in their family for generations.

"Without question, we are focused on quality," Kjerstad says. "We're trying to produce Prime carcasses, upper Choice."

That aim for quality, accompanied by a search for maternal traits, got them to where they wanted to be in building a herd. Finishing everything they raise aside from replacement heifers led them to search for more.

Kjerstad says genetic testing makes that process simpler.

"We're convinced we are going to have to use a combination of taking backfat off, as well as increasing REA to get us to where we want to be on the YG (yield grade) side," he says. "But there's no question, we've got to produce high marbling. That's what we're after."

In 2012, the rancher began using CAB's GeneMax™ (GMX) test to measure gain and grade potential in his high-percentage Angus heifers. While some could use the test for marketing purposes, Kjerstad was simply looking to develop a better cow herd.

"The idea that we don't have to take a

heifer and breed her for four years before we can determine whether she is going to raise calves that didn't marble — that we can get that information before we start — it's amazing," he says.

Visit his ranch just east of the Black Hills and you won't find an unproven bull. Kjerstad uses extensive genetic tests to cull, along with feedlot results and that keen eye he developed through many years as a feeder. Now he's looking for even further genetic testing.

"I am a strong, really strong supporter of

this DNA deal," Kjerstad says. "I just think it's going to revolutionize our industry. It's sure enough the most exciting thing that's happened in my lifetime for cattle. I just sit there, and I'm in awe of how they can tell what they can, from a drop of blood."



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 ^a	Head	%CAB	%Prime	% YG1&YG2	% YG 3
Targeting the Brand Honor Roll:						
Chappell Feedlot	H	51	62.00	11.76	33.33	64.71
Darnall Feedlot	S	134*	60.45	6.72	30.60	59.70
Pratt Feeders LLC	M	60*	60.00	13.33	30.00	61.67
Performance Blenders	M	41	58.97	24.39	29.27	65.85
Chappell Feedlot	H	31	57.14	3.23	38.71	61.29
Darnall Feedlot	H	99	57.14	9.09	41.41	55.56
McPherson County Feeders Inc.	H	62	57.14	6.45	53.23	38.71
McPherson County Feeders Inc.	H	75	53.85	2.67	49.33	45.33
Chappell Feedlot	M	39*	51.28	5.13	58.97	41.03
Darnall Feedlot	S	149*	51.01	6.04	29.53	65.10
Chappell Feedlot	M	40*	50.00	2.50	30.00	67.50
Pratt Feeders LLC	H	64	47.46	1.56	62.50	34.38
Pratt Feeders LLC	S	151	47.06	5.30	52.32	41.72
Chappell Feedlot	S	33*	45.45	0.00	15.15	78.79
Pratt Feeders LLC	H	33*	45.45	3.03	27.27	69.70
Chappell Feedlot	S	30*	43.33	3.33	50.00	46.67
Chappell Feedlot	S	40*	35.00	5.00	40.00	55.00
Honorable Mentions:						
Pratt Feeders LLC	H	73*	75.34	10.96	17.81	68.49
Pratt Feeders LLC	S	110*	71.82	13.64	23.64	62.73
Pratt Feeders LLC	S	67*	65.67	8.96	19.40	67.16
Chappell Feedlot	M	60*	61.67	11.67	41.67	55.00
Beller Feedlot	M	45*	57.78	37.78	20.00	66.67
Darnall Feedlot	H	157	56.39	3.82	54.78	36.31
Chappell Feedlot	H	44*	52.27	11.36	6.82	79.55
McPherson County Feeders Inc.	H	55	48.28	3.64	41.82	45.45
Ford County Feed Yard Inc.	H	95	44.74	9.47	54.74	38.95
McPherson County Feeders Inc.	H	61	43.59	1.64	62.30	34.43
Pratt Feeders LLC	H	118*	42.37	3.39	46.61	46.61
McPherson County Feeders Inc.	H	80	40.32	1.25	66.25	27.50
Darnall Feedlot	S	38*	39.47	2.63	5.26	84.21

^aH=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.

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 175 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 Roundup, May 13-15
- ▶ North Central Regional Feedlot Conference, May 21
- ▶ "Grilltime" Consumer Cooking Class, May 29
- ▶ Chef Summit, June 9-11
- ▶ Buehler's Shareholder Annual Meeting, June 21
- ▶ Celebrity Chef Gale Grand visit, June 23
- ▶ "Phil" in the blank, with VIP media guest Erik Mathes, June 24-25
- ▶ Ohio Beef Council, June 26