



Brand News

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

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Keeping science simple

If you're into research, science or even raising beef cattle, it's easy to fall into the jargon or inside language of the trade. Specialized knowledge is great, but Melissa Brewer, director of communications for Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB), suggested more universal words can be better.

"Our consumers are inundated with so many messages, we have to figure out a better way to be able to engage them, eventually to be able to share the science behind how food is raised," she said.

Daily interaction with consumers gives Brewer an understanding of how those who don't know agriculture see the beef industry. She shared that in a "TED"-style talk with animal scientists from all over the country during the Joint Annual Meetings (JAM) of the American Society of Animal Science (ASAS) this July in Salt Lake City, Utah.

"It's hard to let go of the scientific terms, charts and graphs.

But if you want to be heard in a soundbite society, it's crucial to think like a consumer and engage in a simpler way," she told the group.

Data and research will never lose their importance, but before responding to questions, misconceptions or biases with science, Brewer said a conversation needs to be started and trust built.

That means thinking differently about how you can share your story. Be approachable. Be understandable.

"Don't start with the thesis," she said. "Know the simple way that is enough to get you started in conversation that may lead to other questions as you become a trusted source."

Brewer encouraged the scientists to think visually from the consumer's point of view. Sharing a photo of cattle at a bunk that appeared healthy and happy to the JAM audience, she said a consumer may see a line of cattle in tight quarters being forced to eat. Simply broadening the shot to include more of the pen and possibly a person is enough to show the context of care.

For those with access to university farms, she suggested open houses or school tours to start these conversations, and encouraging urban students to share what they're learning with family and friends.

"These are your future advocates," she said. "Use them."

Relating to consumers isn't just for the scientists, Brewer said, "Looking at your farm or ranch through a consumer's eyes is a good tip for anyone in beef production."

Opening the gates and sharing stories with CAB partners is a critical need today.

"That's crucial in helping our brand continue to connect with consumers, give them confidence and keep them coming back to the meatcase for premium beef," she said.



Melissa Brewer

Boosting demand in Japan

The international market is a big and growing opportunity for the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand to add value to Angus cattle.

Once the leading destination for CAB exports, Japan fell far back after the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE)-related trade disruptions 12 years ago. It has been coming back to the brand at an increasing rate, and a recent surge in sales lifted Japan to a level second only to Canada.

Establishing an office in Tokyo last fall

certainly helped, as did the first-ever CAB Specialists Seminar for Japanese distributor partners in July. Hosted at the Wooster, Ohio, headquarters, the three-day seminar concentrated on sharing the brand's history, the American beef story and the science behind wet-aging vs. dry-aging beef.

The group visited nearby Chippewa Valley Angus Farm, viewing an ultrasound of marbling and external fat in a yearling bull.

The seminar was a way "to better establish relationships with our key distributors in the market," said Brandy Erwin, assistant

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

director for international marketing with CAB.

“One of the highlights was when they had a chance to experience our meat lab,” where learning the science-based specifications established brand credibility, she said. “Our partners now understand what makes our brand different, and we feel confident they can explain it to their customers.”

She credited the CAB team, as well as a contracted interpreter with an animal science doctorate who translated everything from casual to technical points clearly and effectively.

Within a week of the seminar, positive reviews, feedback and promises to attend future events told Erwin the distributors were already passing along the material to further educate their teams and colleagues. “That’s a really big win,” she said.

Success of the seminar led to plans for another event that will engage with Japanese chefs directly, helping familiarize them with the quality and performance of CAB cuts.

Simply innovative

If there’s an easier way to home-grill the best steaks — and the search continues at Greeley’s Colorado Premium Beef, which brought Truly Simple™ to market this year — it’s hard to imagine.

It’s easy to see why the concept featuring the CAB brand won honors this summer: First

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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.

- ▶ Sysco Southeast Florida, July 28-29
- ▶ McCormick and Schmick’s, July 29-30
- ▶ Sysco JBP Chuck Roll Product Innovation, July 1
- ▶ Japan International Specialist Seminar, July 6-9
- ▶ Masters of Brand Advocacy (MBA) 11.2, July 11-15
- ▶ Evans Meats, July 25-26
- ▶ Palmer Food Service with Hyatt Regency and E.B. Green’s Steakhouse, July 25
- ▶ Brand Ambassador Chef Summit, July 26-27

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.



Tom Williams, of western Nebraska’s Chappell Feedlot, talks about using quality and data gathering as points of differentiation. Here’s the clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhY4EGqr9nA>.



Mark Hilton, retired clinical veterinary professor at Purdue and now consultant with Elanco Animal Health, discusses benefits of pairing a well-planned health protocol with nutritional and marketing expertise. Here’s the clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FyUsFil2PX4>.



Hugh Bradley, Cut Bank, Mont., talks about why he uses DNA tools to aid in genetic decisions. Here’s the clip: <https://youtu.be/QGFASAmujL0>.



Mark Gwin, integration management specialist for Certified Angus Beef LLC, describes what Schmacon® is and why cattlemen should care. Here’s the clip: https://youtu.be/3tQhcInt_1E.

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place in *Refrigerated & Frozen Foods* magazine “Top 5 Best New Retail Products” contest.

The center-cut, closely trimmed 4-ounce (oz.), 1½-inch-thick pairs of steaks are pre-portioned and packaged to toss on the grill and serve as dinner for two in 8 minutes.

“We combined years of consumer beef research with Colorado Premium’s inherent steak-cutting experience to come up with this truly innovative product,” says company president Kevin LaFleur.

Provided with easy cooking instructions and recipes, the label answers any questions consumers may have and promises precision from nutrition and calorie counts right down to consistently delicious results.

“A lot of people are really intimidated when it comes to cooking steaks, so our



► A staple and favorite of every Masters of Brand Advocacy (MBA) class, the burger competition set senses ablaze with the sound of the sizzle. When the judges had spoken and the votes were tallied, it was this signature burger that took the prize: A combination of chuck roll, ribeye and brisket, cooked on the flat top.



instructions are easy to follow,” says LaFleur. “That dramatically increases the chance of serving an amazing steak.”

The company’s Truly Simple brand partners with CAB to help all consumers, but especially “millennials, boomers and the nutritionally conscious,” he adds.

Center-cut ribeye, strip loin, sirloin, rib cap, flat iron and beef tips are the six choices in the product line, all offered as two servings per 8-oz. package.

LaFleur points out benefits to retailers and consumers alike.

“At the store level, retailers can age the beef 21 days in the case in the same package,” he says. “Consumers can freeze the items in the package, or serve a delicious, nutritious entrée in 8 minutes. Vacuum-sealed packaging also makes for easy cleanup.”

“Consumer demand for great-tasting beef continues to rise,” says Tracey Erickson, vice president of marketing for CAB. “With these products, customers can enjoy the beef’s complete package of great taste, nutrition and convenience in a satisfying portion size.”

