

New Source for CAB

AngusSource® now live-animal qualifier for CAB program.

by Steve Suther

Calves enrolled in the leading Angus genetic- and source-verification program have a green light on the road to eligibility for the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand. In a move first discussed last winter, the Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) Board of Directors voted unanimously June 9 to approve eligibility of American Angus Association AngusSource® program cattle for the CAB brand.

"We want to endorse and support the Association's forward-looking program that promotes the value of Angus genetics," said Jim Riemann, CAB president.

AngusSource, approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as a Process Verified Program (PVP) last fall, documents source and group age, and it ensures cattle have a minimum of 50% Angus-sired genetics. To be eligible, cattle must be sired by a registered Angus bull and enrolled by the ranch of origin with a documented month, day and year of birth for the oldest calf in the group.

Data from the CAB Feedlot-Licensing Program (FLP) and the Iowa Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity show significantly higher CAB brand acceptance, better health and better feedlot performance for calves with greater than 50% Angus genetics.

Genotype option

USDA-certified branded beef programs allow two methods — genotype and phenotype — to utilize a breed claim. For nearly 30 years, 51% or greater black hair coat has been the phenotypic avenue for identifying Angus-influenced cattle for branded programs.

"The visual method developed by CAB — and the live-animal standard for all USDA-certified Angus brands — will continue as the predominant method to determine eligibility," Riemann noted. "This genotypic option using AngusSource is simply the next logical step for CAB, the most effective means to include Angus-sired cattle independent of hide color.

"It leads us to high-quality cattle that might never have been eligible and will help meet growing consumer demand for the brand," he continued.

Of course, any means of live-animal eligibility is just the first

step in becoming qualified for the CAB brand. The carcasses defined as "Angus-type" by either method are then presented to the government grader and evaluated for the program's eight carcass specifications.

"Those science-based specifications have been the foundation for the brand's success in every segment of the industry from the beginning," Riemann said.

CAB Packing Director Clint Walenciak notified the USDA Livestock and Meat Standardization Branch following the board vote and subsequently sent letters to all licensed packers.

"Most packing companies already have a Quality System Assessment (QSA) program in place for the export markets," Walenciak said. "They already have written manuals and trained people, so they would just need to edit or modify their programs to address the traceability

requirements of AngusSource, such as animal and lot identification (ID) procedures."

Walenciak said the volume of genotype method cattle available for CAB evaluation may be light at first. "Down the road, there will be significant numbers as the program becomes more widely utilized," he said. To streamline operations, packers that opt to include AngusSource cattle for CAB evaluation may choose to do so only for load lots, he noted.

Sara Moyer, director of

AngusSource, said the program has enrolled more than 100,000 cattle since it began and more than 40,000 in the first five months of 2006. Nearly 13 million cattle were evaluated for the CAB brand in 2005.

"This is still a very new concept to most producers, and they are learning how to use it," Moyer said. "The combination of CAB and export eligibility should help drive enrollments."

Since 1995, packers have paid producers more than \$200 million in value-based grid premiums for cattle accepted into the brand. For more information on CAB products and programs, visit www.cabpartners.com.



