



Wendy's: Sharing Beef Quality Story

Key staff members share Wendy's support for beef industry, plans for future beef promotions.

by **Kindra Gordon**, field editor



We are here because we think we have a lot in common," said Liliana Esposito, director of communications for the hamburger chain Wendy's. Esposito shared remarks about the company during a Learning Lounge session in the NCBA Trade Show area at the 2016 Cattle Industry Convention in San Diego Jan. 28. A Wendy's food truck was also on hand for two days, offering free burgers and Frostys® to convention attendees.

Esposito explained that Wendy's is "investing more in our brand and our beef business," and said the company is looking to work with the beef industry to "help us bring a product to our customers that they love."

Established in 1969 by Dave Thomas, Wendy's was built around "fresh, never frozen" burgers.

"Fresh is unique and sets us apart," Esposito noted.

Dennis Hecker, head of quality assurance for Wendy's also shared remarks about the company's focus on quality, saying, "Quality is a way of life at Wendy's."

Hecker noted that they have an animal

welfare and auditing program in place to ensure animals are treated humanely and that the company is supplied with quality beef. He emphasized, "Data drives our decisions on quality. We're not going to make a snap decision, but will look at the data."

The company has an animal-welfare council of staff and food industry consultants that meets quarterly to review animal welfare standards and consumer issues and provides guidance.

Regarding antibiotics, the company's policy states that "antibiotics are only to be used when there is clear evidence that the animal has, or is at risk of developing, a health condition that antibiotics are needed to treat."

In reference to the move by other food companies to source "antibiotic-free" beef, Esposito added, "We won't make inflammatory statements that affect the industry and don't have a plan in place as to how to achieve that supply. . . . The best beef comes from healthy, well-cared-for animals. Sick animals need to be treated, and you're not going to hear anything different from us."

For the future, Esposito noted that Wendy's will be incorporating more information about their beef-quality efforts into their marketing.

"We recognize consumers are looking for more information and transparency," she said. "We need to convey to them the quality-assurance practices in place and that they are constantly being improved." She also emphasized the importance of having producers be part of the journey with Wendy's in reaching consumers.

In spring 2016, Wendy's will be re-launching its Dave's Single and Dave's Double hamburgers. The burgers will feature a new bun, foil packaging and a new campaign that promotes a back-to-basics fresh, quality take on food. Learn more about Wendy's animal welfare policies at www.wendys.com/en-us/about-wendys/animal-welfare-program.

Editor's Note: Kindra Gordon is a cattlegirl and freelance writer from Whitewood, S.D. This article was written as part of Angus Media's online coverage of the Cattle Industry Convention & NCBA Trade Show. For additional coverage, visit the Newsroom at www.4cattlemen.com.

► British celebrity chef Robert Irvine entertained beef industry enthusiasts at the Opening General Session.

PHOTO COURTESY NCBA

Great Flavor, Protein, Nutrition

Celebrity chef Robert Irvine helps kick off 2016 Cattle Industry Convention.

by Kindra Gordon, field editor

British celebrity chef Robert Irvine entertained beef industry enthusiasts at the Opening General Session of the 2016 Cattle Industry Convention & NCBA Trade Show. More than 7,000 cattle producers and industry stakeholders traveled to San Diego, Calif., for the annual convention, which ran Jan. 27-29.

Irvine, who is best known for his programs

on the Food Network, including the popular business makeover show *Restaurant Impossible*, showed off his cooking prowess to the beef audience in two unique challenges. Audience members had the opportunity to interact and select some of the ingredients that Chef Irvine then had to utilize to turn into a tasty dish. One recipe concoction included Lucky Charms, pigs' feet, cabbage, corn dogs and other ingredients, along with a ribeye steak.

While on stage, Irvine, who is known for his fit physique, expressed his appreciation for the industry's product saying, "I love beef?"

Irvine also paid tribute to active and veteran military in the audience, and said, "If it wasn't for the men and women who stand on watch every day around the world, we couldn't be standing here enjoying our freedom." Irvine has dedicated much of his time to USO tours around the world and has established a nonprofit Foundation (<http://chefirvine.com/foundation>), which assists wounded warrior and veteran programs.

He said it has been very rewarding to be involved with the people who do the most and spend the most time ensuring our freedom. He encouraged the audience to find opportunities to help others and be involved

in organizations.

"Helping people who need it is very fulfilling," he shared.

Irvine mentioned that as a chef, he is involved in the menu panels for feeding the military. To that, he expressed his appreciation to the beef producers in the audience.

"What you guys do every day feeds our servicemen and women," Irvine said. "Beef has great flavor, great protein and great nutrition. Please don't stop, because it is very important."

Irvine is author of the book *Fit Fuel*, which is designed to inspire individuals who find themselves struggling to find the motivation to reach their personal health and fitness goals. The book is segmented into three sections, the first of which examines the mental aspect of goal setting, habit forming and long-term maintenance. Learn more at www.fitfuelbook.com.

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PHOTO BY TROY SMITH

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