



► **Left:** Cade Leeper (left) of Mule Creek Ranch demonstrates how to rope a calf during the Kansas Beef Council Pasture-To-Plate Tour.

► **Below:** Tour participants view a cattle auction via video at Pratt Livestock.



Chefs Beef Up their Knowledge

Chefs study beef production from pasture to plate.

A group of around 40 chefs, foodservice professionals and other food influencers from nine states studied beef production and the Kansas beef industry during the Kansas Beef Council Pasture-To-Plate Tour June 10-12 in south central and southwestern Kansas.

The 2½ day event began with a visit to the Cargill Innovations Center (www.cargill.com/company/research-development/facilities/wichita-innovation-center/index.jsp) in Wichita. The facility is home to research, development and food safety testing

activities of Cargill Meat Solutions.

Mule Creek Ranch, a cow-calf operation located near Wilmore, educated the group on the importance of preventative animal health care, proper animal handling and legal identification as they vaccinated, castrated, dewormed and hot-iron branded their spring-born calves and began estrous synchronization of the cow herd. Ranch manager Kim Leeper was joined by son Cade and daughter-in-law Jody as they also discussed the significance of proper stocking rates and range management.

“This is where the quality product you serve your customers begins,” stated Kim Leeper. “Thank you for helping put beef on more plates.”

The Gardiner family at Gardiner Angus Ranch (www.gardinerangus.com/) near Ashland explained their role as seedstock suppliers and the importance of genetic selection on end-product quality. Mark Gardiner demonstrated how to artificially inseminate a replacement heifer and confirmed the pregnancy of another breeding female using ultrasound. Greg Gardiner demonstrated freeze branding and explained how individual identification is utilized and crucial to their recordkeeping and herd management system.

Jeff Sternberger, manager of Midwest Feeders (<http://midwest-feeders.com/>), led the group through the feedyard facility located near Ingalls. Sternberger discussed the importance of safeguarding natural resources and managing the environmental footprint created by feedyards and cited the numerous



► Chefs, foodservice professionals and other food influencers from nine states attended the annual Kansas Beef Council Pasture-To-Plate Tour June 10-12. Tour participants visited a seedstock operation, a cow-calf ranch, a feedyard, an auction market, a beef processing plant, and a research and development facility to learn the production life cycle and to get an idea about how great-tasting, healthy cuts of beef get to their kitchen.

Kansas beef producers support culinary event

Investments made by Kansas beef producers to the Kansas Beef Council helped showcase multiple beef items to key major restaurant and retail chefs in May at a special beef checkoff-funded event at the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone (CIA) in Saint Helena, Calif. The educational “beef immersion event” at CIA provided more than 30 chefs from national companies — who represent more than \$56 billion in total sales potential — with new ideas for beef options at their operations, as well as information on culinary trends and a beef supply and economics update.

The event was part of the national beef checkoff program of work, and the Kansas Beef Council provided additional funds for the seminar to ensure maximum promotion of beef at this prestigious location. Also contributing state checkoff funds were beef councils in Texas, California, Florida, Iowa and South Dakota.

“It was a practical event that gave chefs a chance to see how well new beef items could work in their own operations,” according to Charla Huseman, director of marketing for Kansas Beef Council. “Using the chefs’ creativity and beef’s versatility, value and taste, we were able to demonstrate that beef can work in any restaurant or retail situation and at just about any price point.”

Attendees included large chain restaurant operations such as Applebee’s, Sizzler and Chili’s, and retail chains such as Whole

Foods Market and H-E-B. Among the beef cuts promoted to the group in hands-on kitchen sessions were top sirloin filet, coulotte steak, chuck eye steak, boneless country-style ribs and the Denver steak. During the seminar, chefs were given recipe idea-starters and encouraged to make their own creations from beef items supplied.

Also of value to beef producers were participant group discussions about ways the beef checkoff program could help support efforts to increase beef sales and menu new cuts. Relationships developed at the Greystone event will be expanded through 2013 beef checkoff marketing efforts. Also on hand at the seminar were processors who were potential suppliers of these new beef items.

“By providing ideas to and building relationships with these key chefs, we’re boosting beef’s demand among those who will make decisions about what is on menus all across the country,” said Huseman. “We’re also ensuring that the right connections are being made to ensure there’s a source for this product.”

Among seminar topics were menu and culinary ideation; how new beef cuts can drive profits; secondary value cuts and corresponding cost-saving measures; beef’s versatility; muscle profiling and cutting demonstrations; beef pricing and trends forecasting; and sustainability and beef’s carbon footprint.

governmental regulations in place to ensure protection.

Sternberger also discussed how cattle comfort and care are top priorities of feeding operations. He emphasized the availability of fresh feed and water, adequate amounts of pen and bunk space allowed per each animal and the daily routine utilized to check the health and well-being of all cattle at the facility. The group also viewed Midwest’s feedmill and cattle processing facilities.

Larry and Becky Jones and family at JO Cattle Co. near Holcomb hosted the culinary professionals for dinner and an evening of one-on-one conversations with area farmers, ranchers and cattle feeders. Chef Dave Zino and Meat Scientist Bridgett Wasser from the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) presented the checkoff-funded Beef Alternative Merchandising program and showcased the smaller-portion, lower-price-

point menu examples of this merchandising tool.

Cargill Meat Solutions provided a tour of its beef processing and fabrication facility at Dodge City. Plant manager Tom Allen discussed the scope of products produced at the site and stressed the importance of food safety interventions in place to ensure a safe, quality end product.

Mike Lewis from Pratt Livestock at Pratt described how livestock auction markets connect cattle sellers and buyers and explained how prices of cattle are determined. The group watched a sample of Pratt’s weekly sale via video.

Lastly, veterinarian Dan Thomson from Kansas State University’s Beef Cattle Institute (<http://beefcattleinstitute.org/>) and College of Veterinary Medicine led discussions on how beef industry technologies are responsibly utilized to meet the protein demand of a

growing world population. He detailed the extensive, government-required testing and approval process of growth hormones and antibiotics. Thomson also discussed the differences between animal rights and animal welfare.

“The tour was over the top,” said Alan Lamoreux with the Bluegrass Hospitality Group, based in Lexington, Ky. “Not everyone is fortunate enough to see firsthand the processes and progression and secondly, to meet the dedicated and committed people it takes to bring great-tasting beef from pasture to plate safely, affordably and proudly!”

Hosted annually, this beef checkoff-funded event is designed to expose food influencers to how beef is produced in hopes of increasing its usage and presence on menus nationwide. **AJ**

Editor’s Note: Article and the accompanying photos were provided by the Kansas Beef Council.



► **Above:** Jeff Sternberger (center) manager of Midwest Feeders, discusses cattle comfort, care and well-being with the culinary professionals.

► **Left:** Mark Gardiner (center) of Gardiner Angus Ranch demonstrates how to artificially inseminate a replacement heifer. Here Gardiner prepares the insemination equipment.