



# Meat Magic

CAB's Phil Bass delivers high-energy sessions at NCBA's Learning Lounge.

Story & photos by *Shelby Mettlen*, assistant editor



**C**ertified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) meat scientist Phil “Dr. Phil” Bass threw around knives and steer-shaped stress balls inside the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) Trade Show Learning Lounge Feb. 1, but not without polished technique. Bass worked the crowd as part of the Cattle Industry Convention hosted this year in Nashville, Tenn.

“This is meat science, not rocket science. We kind of just call it what it is,” he told a full crowd while holding up a round, exhibiting meat cuts and explaining to attendees each cut’s best use.

“I’ll happily throw steers at you if you interact,” he told his audience, encouraging participation.

Participate it did, as Bass covered topics from marbling to trends.

Bass described the significance of each cut and the importance of using it correctly, cooking it to the correct doneness and not wasting any parts of the carcass. He talked about trends, including new cuts like the Denver steak, flat-iron steak and ribeye cap muscle, which can be marketed for more

than \$30 per pound. In fact, he noted, the ribeye itself has become a byproduct of the ribeye muscle, due to the desirability of the cap muscle.

Some cuts, like the tenderloin and ribeye, can be cooked to medium rare, where other cuts benefit from being cooked to medium to give them greater tenderness.

“What is chicken?” he asked his audience. “Basically a vegetable.”

## Changing preferences

Bass tugged at the heartstrings of beef lovers as he explained the significance of marbling and how much its demand has evolved and improved over the years.

What have also evolved are consumer preferences, he noted. Butcher shops and meat cutters need to cater not only to the traditional audience, but now to the Millennial Generation. Cuts like roasts are preferred smaller by those audiences, and steak cuts are preferred leaner.

“Now, we have to be more open to giving people what they need, what they want,

[rather] than just saying, “This is what we have,” he pointed out.

Cattle producers face the same issue.

You can’t say, “Here’s what we have. Hope you like it,” Bass noted. “You say, ‘What can I do for you? How can I make these animals better for you?’”

It’s a concept CAB and the American Angus Association have embraced and worked to perfect for the past three decades.

Bass stressed the importance of quality and how CAB standards differ from other quality standards. He also reminded the audience of CAB’s Roast Perfect app, which can be downloaded to mobile devices to assist in making your roasts the best they can be.

**AJ**

**Editor’s Note:** This article was written as part of Angus Media’s coverage of the 2017 Cattle Industry Convention. For further coverage, watch future issues of the Angus Journal and visit [www.angus.media](http://www.angus.media).