

Leaders' Tour

Angus reps participate in elite national cattlemen's conference.

Landi McFarland, a fourth-generation Angus breeder from Ellston, Iowa, was one of more than 50 young cattlemen and women selected to participate in the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) 32nd Young Cattlemen's Conference (YCC).

The YCC program is a comprehensive, nationwide tour of beef industry sectors, created to enhance leadership skills in young beef industry professionals.

Dave Mullins, former regional manager for the American Angus Association, also participated in YCC after being selected by his fellow producers to participate in the 2011 class.

"YCC is a prestigious and competitive program designed to foster the future leadership of our industry," says Forrest Roberts, NCBA chief executive officer. "The participants selected to attend YCC were chosen because of their exceptional contributions to the beef industry and their potential to be a strong voice in our future development. I look forward to seeing them take an increased leadership role within NCBA and the beef industry."

McFarland is an Iowa State University graduate who has been involved with the daily activities of her family's operation, Hoover Angus Farm, her entire life. Hoover Angus



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Farm is one of Iowa's largest purebred herds with 400 cows. McFarland manages the farm's annual production sale and coordinates several other aspects of the operation, such as breeding, genetic evaluations, herd sire selection and customer relations.

She also has a passion for being a positive advocate and spokesperson for agriculture. Her favorite industry organizations are the American Angus Association, Certified Angus Beef LLC, Iowa Cattlemen's Association and Farm Bureau.

McFarland said YCC was an opportunity to learn more about the issues facing the beef industry in order to become a better advocate back home.

Mullins grew up in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley on a small cow-calf and sheep operation. After completing two years at junior college where he served on a nationally competitive livestock judging team, he transferred to Virginia Tech and completed a degree in agricultural economics in 2001. He is currently working toward a graduate degree in agricultural extension and education through Virginia Tech.

Mullins served as regional manager for the Association from 2003-2011, covering Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland and the New England states.

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The eight-day tour began at NCBA headquarters in Denver, Colo., where participants were given an organizational overview of NCBA and the Beef Checkoff Program. While in Denver, the group also heard from representatives of Cattle-Fax and

the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF). They toured a new Safeway retail store and learned about Rancher's Reserve brand beef marketing efforts. The group spent a day in Greeley, Colo., visiting JBS Five Rivers feedyards and processing facilities.

"It is really important for the participants to see the range of beef production — from a cow-calf ranch to a feedlot and a processing plant," Mullins says. "It drives home the point that our industry, though composed of many sectors, is ultimately interconnected in our efforts to produce wholesome and nutritious beef."

In Chicago, YCC participants met with the senior management of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange at the Chicago Board of Trade. They had the chance to watch the activity on the trading floor and witness



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futures trading firsthand. Participants also visited Otto & Sons Industries, a family-owned company providing quality products and custom solutions for the food industry since 1909. This tour offered a view of how boxed beef is turned into custom-order portions for both major restaurant chains and some of the nation's top steakhouses.

The group then traveled to Washington, D.C., where participants were greeted at a reception hosted by John Deere. The following morning, the group received an issues briefing from NCBA's government affairs staff about policy issues currently facing the cattle industry.

Later in the day, these future leaders were

given the opportunity to visit one-on-one with members of their state's congressional delegation, expressing their viewpoints regarding the beef industry and their cattle operations. During their congressional visits, participants focused on issues including the USDA's proposed rule on livestock and poultry marketing, trade and overreaching regulations proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The group then traveled to Aldie, Va., for a tour and barbecue at Whitestone Farms, one of the nation's elite purebred Angus operations.

The Angus Foundation annually sponsors an Association member to attend the YCC.

Applicants must be between the ages of 25 and 50 and must be an active member of the NCBA as well as the American Angus Association. Applications are typically due in early January. An application will be available at www.angusfoundation.org.

To learn more about the YCC and the program's educational and networking opportunities, visit www.beefusa.org, contact your state cattlemen's association, or contact Marvin Kokes at 303-850-3339 or mkokes@beef.org.



Editor's Note: *This article was adapted from news releases provided by NCBA.*