

Foodservice Beef Backer Award Winners Announced

Distinguished checkoff-funded award honors exemplary beef restaurants nationwide

The Beef Checkoff Program announced winners of the 2010 National Beef Backer Awards at the Annual Cattle Industry Conference in Denver, Colo. Each year, three restaurants are recognized for their efforts in menuing and marketing beef. This year's national winners included The Hitching Post I & II (Buellton, Calif.) in the "Independent Restaurant" category, Home Style Dining LLC Ponderosa and Bonanza Steakhouses (Plano, Texas) in the "Chain Restaurant" category, and Red, The Steakhouse (Miami, Fla.) as the "Innovator of the Year."

"Industry reports show beef dollar sales are up 10%. Thanks to foodservice professionals' creativity and passion for our product, beef has not only gained sales momentum, but also remains at the head of new menu trends. It is important that we recognize and thank establishments that are providing outstanding beef-eating experiences away from home," noted Iowa cattleman Scott McGregor, chairman of the

Joint Foodservice Committee. "Today, we are pleased to honor three restaurants for their ongoing commitment to serve beef at its best — every meal, every day."

Independent restaurant

Owner and Manager Frank Ostini said he was flattered to accept the award for the "Independent Restaurant" category on behalf of his family's restaurants, The Hitching Post I and II.

"Our restaurants have been serving patrons high-quality beef for almost 60 years. Dedication to tradition and attention to preparation make our steaks truly exceptional. By using both old and new methods of beef preparation we have developed an exciting menu, which is uniquely our own," says Ostini.

The Hitching Post delivers on its promise to give its guests expertly cooked, delicious steaks.

"We work with simple preparation methods indigenous to this part of

California. Our basic seasoning and open-fire cooking method allow the steak to speak for itself," Ostini explains. Their patrons appreciate the "magic" their preparation method produces. The Oakwood smoked flavor and caramelized crust bring customers back for more.

Chain restaurant

On behalf of the Ponderosa and Bonanza Steakhouse restaurant chain, Homestyle Dining LLC was delighted to receive the "Chain Restaurant" National Beef Backer Award. Headquartered in Plano, Texas, Homestyle Dining LLC and its affiliated companies own, operate and franchise Ponderosa and Bonanza Steakhouses throughout the United States and around the world, proudly continuing a tradition of family-focused steakhouses that began in 1963.

During the past 48 years, the Ponderosa and Bonanza Steakhouses chain has grown to more than 230 locations in 15 states and

Retail Beef Backer Winners Announced

Four grocers honored for outstanding beef marketing and merchandising efforts.

While the four winners of this year's Retail Beef Backer Awards cover the span of the nation, there's one thing they all have in common: their love for beef. The 2010 Retail Beef Backer Award winners, Broulim's, Sentry Foods, Harris Teeter and HAC Inc., were honored Feb. 3 at the 2011 Cattle Industry Annual Convention and National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Trade Show.

"I'm continuously amazed and impressed with the initiatives these innovative, industry-leading retailers take in their stores to increase beef demand and sales," says Margie Hande, cow-calf operator in Amidon, N.D., and chair of the checkoff's Retail Committee. "With more than 50% of all domestic beef volume in the United States sold through the retail channel, we encourage grocers to use tactics that leverage checkoff investments and expand the placement, overall use and visibility of beef for their customers."

Winners were selected for their excellence in a variety of promotional partnerships, beef merchandising and education programs. A third-party judging panel also took into consideration the retailers' support of beef checkoff-funded initiatives such as Beef Alternative Merchandising, Hispanic Marketing, Easy Fresh Cooking®, Beef Training Camp, Summer Grilling and Holiday Roast promotions, in addition to store-specific campaigns.

The 2010 award winners are:

► **Independent retailer — Broulim's Fresh Foods.** Based in

Eastern Idaho, this grocer has built a successful beef program known for the highest-quality meat products with a commitment to superior service, value, innovation and safety.

► **Mid-size retailer — Sentry.** This Wisconsin operation of 26 independently owned and operated stores is focused on delivering strong customer service and quality perishables, earning them the title of "Best Meat in Town!"

► **Large chain retailer — Harris Teeter Inc.** This two-time category winner continues to blaze new trails to break down the barriers between consumers and the meatcase.

► **Innovator of the Year — HAC Inc.** The operator of Homeland Stores, United Stores and Country Mart in Oklahoma and Kansas won the judges over with its aggressive campaign to launch the Red River Ranch Angus Beef brand and explore new opportunities in beef merchandising.

Started in 2006, the National Retail Beef Backer Awards program was developed to recognize the partnership between America's beef-producing families and its grocery partners, and encourage other retailers to become more involved in the marketing and promotion of beef.

Retailers interested in entering the 2011 contest should contact their state beef council or visit www.beefretail.org.

Editor's Note: The above article is adapted from a news release provided by the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board.

in 6 countries outside of the United States.

Jon Rice, executive vice president and chief marketing officer, says, "Homestyle Dining LLC is extremely honored to accept this award on behalf of the entire Ponderosa and Bonanza Steakhouses chain. We believe a delicious steak dinner should be affordable for the everyday family."

In the summer of 2010, Homestyle Dining LLC, with the support of Ponderosa and Bonanza franchisees across the country, launched a system-wide retail campaign in the United States offering a free 6-ounce sirloin with the purchase of a regular adult dinner buffet. The campaign helped boost steak sales at Ponderosa and Bonanza and was perfectly aligned with the chain's messaging on providing great food at a great value to its customers.

Innovator

Red, The Steakhouse took home the "Innovator of the Year" title. Executive Chef Peter Vauthy says, "We like to think of beef as a partner in our business rather than just a product. We are so proud to be recognized for something that we consider an integral part of who we are as an operation."

Vauthy attributes Red, The Steakhouse's success to its cutting-edge menu and excellent quality ingredients.

"Red, The Steakhouse only uses the highest-quality beef, for every dish from meatballs to made-to-order steak tartare, we want the quality of our food to match the integrity and intensity of what we do here. We want our waitstaff to feel empowered by the product they offer; you can hear the pride in their voice when we talk about the

food we serve, where it came from and the relationship we have with our purveyor."

Red, The Steakhouse is constantly offering fun twists on traditional steaks. "We have a bone-in filet that our patrons love and for Valentine's Day we are having our porterhouse specially butchered into the shape of a heart," Vauthy remarks.

Restaurant operators interested in entering the 2011 Beef Backer contest should contact their state beef council.



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New Dietary Guidelines Released

The new dietary guidelines favor protein, but continuing research on beef nutrition is needed.

by **Kindra Gordon**

New dietary guidelines for Americans were announced Monday, Jan. 31, and proteins fared well in the recommendations. Specifically, the guidelines emphasize consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy and a "variety of protein foods" — including lean meat.

While seafood was emphasized in the guidelines, the beef industry's 29 lean cuts also fit favorably with the guidelines' focus on proteins that offer nutritional density. Issued jointly by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the guidelines are updated every five years to address pressing issues with Americans.

Although the 2010 dietary guidelines are just newly announced, food scientist Roger Clemens was at the Cattle Industry Convention in Denver Feb. 4 to urge the industry to continue beef nutrition research and prepare for the 2015 guideline review process to ensure beef continues to be viewed favorably.

Clemens, who is an adjunct professor of pharmacology and pharmaceutical sciences within the University of Southern

California School of Pharmacy, served on the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. He explained that the 2015 committee will be facilitated by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a role they have not previously had.

"They will look at it (the guidelines) differently. They do not have a food background," Clemens told the NCBA Human Nutrition Research Committee. "Conceivably, they could tear apart beef and say beef — or any meat — doesn't have a role in a healthy diet."

With that said, Clemens said the nutrition guidelines can only be made based on evidence in the scientific literature. Thus, he stressed, "Your industry has got to be doing research on the benefits of beef, and you need to get it in peer-reviewed journals. Now is the time to act." Clemens noted that for research to be used in the next go-round of evaluations for the 2015 guidelines, it would need to be published in the scientific literature prior to the spring of 2014.

The beef industry should continue to educate consumers on the protein quality of beef, Clemens added. "You have a very nutrient-rich product. Focus on that positive

message. I think you (the beef industry) are at a wonderful position to advance by looking at the dietary positives beef offers."

Clemens said the central message from the dietary guidelines is that people need to be consuming fewer calories and expending more. That goes hand in hand with choosing nutrient-rich foods like beef.

Additionally, Clemens urged the beef industry to identify advocates who understand agriculture and food and can become spokespersons and research advocates for beef. Along with that he suggested, "Participate in health and wellness conferences, work closely with quick-service restaurants, work closely with consumer groups. Bring your science and nutritional messages about beef to them firsthand."

He concluded, "If you don't have a voice, it (beef) won't be considered."

To view the complete dietary guidelines report, visit www.dietaryguidelines.gov.



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