

End-product Education

NJAA members learn about final beef product through carcass steer contest.

Story & photos by **Kasey Brown**, associate editor

The showing is only one small component of the beef industry. For many members of the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA), the showing is their entrance into the beef business. This entry point helps guide them to the ultimate end product for Angus cattlemen — producing high-quality beef for the consumer. The NJAA's carcass steer contest at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) rewards juniors for producing steers with excellent-quality carcasses.

The 2015 contest in Tulsa, Okla., July 12-18 featured 28 entries from 12 states. The steers were checked in at the Tulsa fairgrounds, tagged with an electronic ID tag (eID) and a visual tag, weighed, and loaded onto a semi, which took them to the Cargill Meat Solutions processing plant in Dodge City, Kan.

"The carcass steer contest is probably one of the most important contests we have based on our breed and our advantages," says American Angus Association Director of Events and Education Jaclyn Clark. "It teaches our juniors about producing a high-quality product."

Within five days, carcass data were received and ranked by carcass merit. The top steers were announced at the NJAS awards ceremony July 17.

"I've done this contest every year because Dad wanted us to understand that outside appearances don't necessarily mean what's on the inside," says Esther McCabe, Elk City,



Kan., last year's reserve grand bred-and-owned (B&O) champion.

Jordyn Wickard, Greenfield, Ind., is a first-year carcass steer competitor and admits that she had tears in her eyes as she loaded her steer onto the truck.

"I learned through 4-H and NJAA about the circle of life," she says. "Since I'm a cattle producer, it's my job to do this. Feeding the world is the best thing I can do."

How to prepare for the contest

McCabe explains that this contest is

unique because all of the work is done at home before arriving at NJAS. Steers must be trained to lead before arriving, but she says in terms of NJAS, carcass steer competitors are done at the beginning of the week. That said, there is plenty to be done before the show.

Selection plays a large part in the process. Chase Monte, Mexico, Mo., 2014 grand champion carcass steer winner, says he goes out with their farm manager Ben Eggers to select his carcass steer with the idea to balance phenotypic and genotypic traits. Monte says he looks for a moderate- to large-framed

2015 NJAS Carcass Contest Results

Rank	Name	State Group	Entry #	Live wt. (lb.)	Dressing %	HCW (lb.)	Fat (in.)	REA (sq. in.)	Marb score (400 = Small ⁰⁰)	QG	YG
1	Callie Eastin	VA	10	1,365	60.9%	831	0.68	16.5	712	PR-	2.5
2	Chase Mogck	SD	24	1,440	64.8%	933	0.64	14.8	959	PR+	3.4
3	Reba Colin	MO	8	1,070	62.7%	671	0.36	11.9	767	PR-	2.6
4	Suter Clark	VA	7	1,410	60.4%	851	0.48	15.8	683	CH+	2.3
5	Callie Eastin	VA	11	1,485	61.2%	909	0.52	15.5	635	CH+	2.7
6	Alexis Koelling	MO	16	1,410	60.7%	856	0.80	12.7	766	PR-	4.1
7	Casey Martin		18	1,285	62.8%	807	0.59	14.5	561	CH ⁰	2.8
8	Beau Bromenshenk	MT	1	1,310	61.2%	802	0.52	14.4	618	CH+	2.7
9	Reed Wendel	ND	33	1,255	63.3%	795	0.56	14.0	664	CH+	2.9
10	Casey Martin		19	1,265	62.6%	792	0.48	13.6	589	CH ⁰	2.8



steer that is deep-bodied with superior muscle definition. He also keeps carcass trait expected progeny differences (EPDs) in mind — marbling, ribeye and backfat.

McCabe says she's learned just how much genetic selection goes into producing a high-quality feeder steer. Calves fed the same will perform differently because of their genetic potential.

She looks at carcass EPDs, the beef value index (\$Beef), and performance EPDs like weaning weight and yearling weight to determine growth potential. She's had success

using both artificial insemination (AI) sires and herd sires as long as the genetic potential is there.

Nutrition for a carcass steer is different

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2015 NJAS Carcass Contest state group results

Rank	Team	Name	Entry #	Prem. (\$/hd.)	State Avg.
1	VA	Callie Eastin	10	265.92	
1	VA	Suter Clark	7	161.69	
1	VA	Callie Eastin	11	154.53	194.05
2	MO	Reba Colin	8	201.30	
2	MO	Alexis Koelling	16	154.08	
2	MO	David Warfield	32	87.78	147.72
3	SD	Chase Mogck	24	242.58	
3	SD	Christina Mogck	25	113.12	
3	SD	Ty Mogck	26	23.91	126.54
4	ND	Reed Wendel	33	135.15	
4	ND	Sara Hatlewick	15	110.33	
4	ND	Clay Hatlewick	14	93.60	113.03
5	KS	Kayden McClayland	23	113.64	
5	KS	Esther McCabe	20	113.40	
5	KS	Luke Sankey	28	111.48	112.84
6	MT	Beau Bromenshenk	1	152.38	
6	MT	Beau Bromenshenk	2	89.88	
6	MT	Garrett Bromenshenk	3	86.24	109.50

CAB®	Grid prem. (\$/cwt.)	Carcass prem. (\$/hd.)
	32.00	265.92
Yes	26.00	242.58
Yes	30.00	201.30
Yes	19.00	161.69
Yes	17.00	154.53
Yes	18.00	154.08
Yes	19.00	153.33
Yes	19.00	152.38
Yes	17.00	135.15
Yes	17.00	134.64

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than feeding — and maintaining — a show steer. McCabe says you can push a carcass steer harder with more grain. Show steers are fed to maintain the optimum level of finish for a much longer period during the show season.

Monte agrees, and says he feeds his carcass steers show feed but with added corn. He aims to find a balance between harvest weight and optimum fat cover.

McCabe says she worked with Derek Martin at Kinsley Feeders to learn more about feeding, and she enjoyed hearing about it from an industry perspective. She learned more about the tools and resources available in the feeding industry.

She recommends juniors start with good genetics and use their resources by talking to those in the industry.

“I’ve never found anyone in the industry unwilling to help,” she emphasizes.

Real-world results

The top steer exhibitors were awarded contest premiums in addition to carcass premiums. Of the 28 steers, 20 qualified for the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand, hitting more than 70% acceptance (see Table 1 for data on the top 10). In addition to prize money, contestants receive carcass data back to utilize in future selection decisions.

Prize premiums are funded through an Angus Foundation endowment established by Curtis and Ann Long of Briarwood Angus Farms, Butler, Mo.

“This contest teaches kids to understand the end product, and how to produce a quality eating experience for the consumer and to target the CAB brand,” says Long. “Every kid involved should profit from this learning experience — to learn how genetics,

feeding or environment affect the quality of cattle.”

He says it was a natural fit for he and Ann to be involved with the carcass steer contest because he believes youth involved with cattle projects are too busy to get into trouble. Helping young people learn about their role in the beef industry is a passion of his, and he has started a carcass steer contest at the county, state and national levels.

The Longs have been very involved with the contest and they are very interactive with the juniors, McCabe adds. They ask contestants about their steers each year and invite the winners to speak at the annual Angus Foundation Supporter Recognition Event at the annual convention each November.

This year’s winners

Callie Eastin, Gretna, Va., exhibited the steer named 2015 grand champion in both the B&O and owned divisions. Her steer sired by Riverbend Cornerstone had a 2.5 yield grade and a low-Prime quality grade. Eastin’s steer earned a \$32-per-hundredweight (cwt.) grid premium.

Chase Mogck, Olivet, S.D., won reserve grand champion owned steer with a son of Connealy5050 611B. He had a 3.4 yield grade and earned a high-Prime quality grade. He earned a \$26-per-cwt. grid premium. Reserve B&O steer was owned by Reba Colin, Butler, Mo. Her steer, a son of DSA Predestined Evrrgrn 816, had a 2.6 yield grade and low-Prime quality grade, earning a \$30-per-cwt. premium.

Another aspect of the contest is the state group. Three steers are grouped together

by at least two exhibitors in a real-world application to group like lots.

McCabe notes that the state group adds another aspect of real-world application. Juniors sort alike steers based on breeding, feeding and weights to form a more uniform group, like a load lot. Only three steers can compete in the state group, so more selection screening is necessary, especially for states with a large number of entries.

The Virginia team consisting of Callie Eastin and Suter Clark won the state group. Missouri’s team consisting of Reba Colin; Alexis Koelling, Laddonia; and David Warfield, Butler, placed second.

McCabe, Monte and Wickard advise participating in the contest, but an early start helps garner success. Says Monte, “I’ve learned a lot of different things from this contest versus going in the showing. It changes things up a bit. I highly recommend it.”



► Virginia junior Angus members won champion state carcass group. Pictured are (from left) **Suter Clark**, Curtis Long and **Callie Eastin**.



► Junior Angus members entered 28 steers in the Carcass Steer Contest. Pictured are (from left) **Callie Eastin**, grand champion owned and grand champion B&O carcass steer; Curtis Long of Briarwood Angus Farms, award sponsor; **Chase Mogck**, reserve champion carcass steer; **Suter Clark**, fourth-place carcass steer; and **Reba Colin**, reserve champion B&O carcass steer.



► Missouri junior Angus members won reserve champion carcass group. Pictured are (from left) **Alexis Koelling**, Curtis Long, and **David Warfield Jr.**, **Reba Colin** and David Warfield.

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