

# One Crazy Cook-Off



► Dressed as a classy cavewoman, Anna Carpenter helps her team educate consumers about the Certified Angus Beef brand.

## Junior members go all out in NJAS contest.

Story & photos by **Nicole Lane**, editorial intern

**P**olished, clean and professional is the look teams strive to embody as they walk through the door of the competition room. Well, most of them anyway. The Kansas intermediate team in the Auxiliary-sponsored All-American *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) Cook-Off stormed through the black curtains dressed in fur and sporting bare feet, bushy eyebrows and messy hair. The cavewomen gathered around a fire sharing their kill for the day, an unsatisfactory, average piece of prehistoric beef.

They were fighting over the tough beef leg when a classy cavewoman interrupted their dinner. From her earrings to the well-marbled meat in her arms, the audience could see that this cavewoman was all about high quality. Kind and gentle, she shared her *Certified Angus Beef* with her new friends and educated them about the 10 quality specifications required to get meat to her plate. Now civilized, the cavewomen threw away the other beef and gladly shared a meal together.

Cue the applause: The cavewomen

returned to their normal selves as Kansas Junior Angus Association members Anna Carpenter, Laura Carpenter and Mia Hastings of Wamego; Sarah Loomis, Council Grove; Morgan Woodbury, Quenemo; and Madison Wulfskuhle, Berryton. They led

the judges to their cave table elaborately decorated down to the real cow bone that acted as a centerpiece. The group shared their cooking and CAB knowledge as the judges enjoyed their recipe, Umami Overload CAB Bruschetta Pizzetta.



► The Kansas intermediate team wowed the judges with their Umami Overload Bruschetta Pizzetta recipe. To try the grilled pizza recipe, turn to page 202.

## Behind the scenes

While the performance went smoothly, what most audience members didn't know was the group's work began long before competition day. From combining their individual bruschetta recipes to create their dish to handmaking their costumes, writing a script and practicing, these juniors put in a lot of time and effort.

"We've been practicing since we arrived at junior show," says Loomis. "Our costumes are homemade. My dress was actually part of a gun safe — you know, the fuzzy soft part that protects the guns? We also found a bunch of our props at home and made the others."

Although their recipe only takes 15 minutes to make, competition day started early. After the cattle were fed, it was time to practice the skit one last time, decorate the table, get dressed, and do hair and makeup (something that takes time for six cavegirls). Once in costume, the team weaved in and out of the chaos of other teams in the midst of preparation to make their pizzettas. With assistance from their parents, they prepared the food and even helped man the grill in full costume.

"It's just fun to be goofy, and I've always kind of liked acting but never had time for it," Anna Carpenter says. "This is my chance to get out there and have a lot of fun with my friends."

## Valuable learning experience

In the midst of the crazy atmosphere and laughter, valuable learning also takes place.

"Not only have I learned to be responsible and take my part on a team and speak in public, but I've also learned a lot about the Angus breed and why it's one of the best out there," says Hastings.



► **Above:** To watch the cavegirl Cook-Off journey from beginning to end, digital readers can click above, or visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxVC7edPHIU&feature=youtu.be>.

► **Right:** Mia Hastings' role as a wild cavewoman allowed her to learn more about the beef industry and experience NJAS even without having cattle to show.



► From making their costumes by hand to creating a recipe, lots of work took place before competition day for these juniors.

The girls admit they may have missed a few lines on competition day, but they learned to quickly rebound and still put on a good performance.

"This contest makes you think on your feet and explain to consumers about beef; ... sell our product, CAB; and get the word out why it's one of the best," Anna says.

Her first year as a competitor, Loomis says she's fallen in love with the contest and plans to come back again next year.

"This has been about having fun, meeting new friends and learning more about the Angus industry," Loomis says.

## No calf required

Not all of the team members traveled to Tulsa with cattle. Hastings says she came just for the Cook-Off. The competition gave her the opportunity to experience NJAS even though she didn't have any Angus cattle to exhibit this year.

"When this was created it was partially to give an opportunity for juniors to be a part of NJAS even if they didn't have a calf to come to this event," says Anne Patton Schubert, co-chair of the event. "You only need to bring yourself, your team and your CAB knowledge."

The cavegirls weren't the only ones with an extravagant performance. Each team that participated had its own theme with which to run wild.

"We encourage juniors to be creative with this contest and pick a theme that they can support through the table setting, costumes, music and makeup," Patton Schubert says. "The costumes are pretty over the top, as are the place settings and the script. I don't think a winning entry would ever be done in just one practice."

