

Practice Makes Perfect

Four winners named in NJAS prepared public speaking contest.

compiled by **Micky Wilson**

The National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) hosts a prepared public speaking contest each year in conjunction with the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS). Juniors Angus members are divided into four divisions for the competition: juniors, 9-13 years old; intermediate I, 14-15 years old; intermediate II, 16-17 years old; and seniors, 18-21 years old.

Winners in each division received the following cash awards: first, \$125; second, \$100; and third, \$75. Additionally, the *Angus Journal* sponsored college scholarships for the top three winners in the senior division. The scholarship amounts were: first, \$1,000; second, \$750; and third, \$500. Congratulations to all the prepared public speaking contest winners. The first-place speeches from each division follow.

Cole Gardiner, Kansas Junior division “Artificial Insemination”

All of my life I've gone with my dad to the AI (artificial insemination) barn to clean up after the cattle once he's done AIing them. All the while I would wonder what all of the strange equipment lying around was for, so I decided to get involved.

Hello, my name is Cole Gardiner, and today I would like to teach you how to AI using the easy four-step process I call ESIC. All you need is:

- ▶ the right **E**quipment,
- ▶ **S**emen,
- ▶ to know how to **I**nseminate, and
- ▶ to **C**heck for pregnancy later on.

Let's look first at getting the equipment. You will need plastic gloves along with

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lubricant to keep the cow sterile and clean while AIing her. Another thing you will need is a cooling tank filled with liquid nitrogen to keep the semen frozen while not in use. You will also need a French insemination gun along with protective plastic tubes for the insemination process. Another item you will need is a pair of scissors for clipping the semen straws.

Now that you have all of your equipment, you'll need semen. Two sources I would suggest are Select Sires, a company that has been providing high-quality semen to the U.S. since 1967, or Genex, another reputable company.

Now that you have everything in order, we're ready to begin the insemination process. Pick the straw of your selected sire out of the cooling tank and thaw it in 96° F water for 45 seconds to 1 minute. Make sure not to refreeze these straws, as they will become fractured and unusable once the semen is thawed.

Place [the semen] inside the gun, and put one of the plastic tubes over the gun.

Tighten the O-ring so that the straw and tube do not fall off. Clip the straw with the scissors a ¼ inch down so you may inject the semen.

Now you need to take one of your plastic gloves, put it on your non-dominant hand and put the lubricant on it. You're ready to start AIing.

Let's begin.

Take your gloved hand and stick it into the rectum (upper cavity). Insert the gun into the vulva (lower cavity). Use your hand that is inside the cow to feel for the tip of the gun, then slowly advance the gun until you reach several flaps of skin. You have now reached the cervix. Do not poke this wall, as it will very likely become damaged.

Place your gloved hand around the cervix (it will feel somewhat like a chicken's neck),

and use your hand to guide the tip of the gun through the three to four folds of the cervix.

Once you have gone through the cervical folds, push the gun back to where it is just breaching the cervix so you do not favor one uterine horn over the other, or the cow's chance of pregnancy will decrease. You may bump the bifurcation of the uterine horn. If so, back off to be sure that you are in the uterine body. At this point,

depress the plunger slowly to eject the semen.

Now that your cow is inseminated, take your hand out of the cow and slowly take out the gun so you do not cause any damage. Put the used protective plastic tube in the non-dominant hand, pull the glove inside out and throw it away.

The final stage is checking for pregnancy. It is imperative that you check for [signs of



Cole Gardiner

estrus] from Days 18 to 21. Make sure that they do not come into heat or you will need to breed them again. If the bred cattle do not come into estrus, you need to ultrasound at 25 days to see if they are pregnant or at 45 days after breeding. You can have a qualified person palpate your cattle.

Let's review ESIC. You need to have the right *equipment*, get *semen* from a good supplier, know how to *inseminate* a cow, and know how to *check* for pregnancy.

Remember, if you don't want to be the little boy cleaning up after everyone, why not start your career today?

Bailey Harsh, Ohio Intermediate I division "Taking a Stand for Beef"

According to Sir Winston Churchill, "A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get even its pants on."

Did you ever find yourself thinking, "Wow, that person is providing incorrect information about the beef industry, and someone should do something about it?" Well, folks, that someone is you, me and everyone else in the industry that makes a living producing safe and wholesome beef.

I believe the beef industry has a serious lack of spokespeople who are willing to stand up and be counted. It isn't scientists, university experts or association staff people that we need, but rather folks like you and me who are willing to put it on the line whenever the opportunity exists to provide factual information about the safety and quality of the U.S. beef industry.

Why do we need more folks who are willing to step forward and defend our industry? My answer is because we have a growing number of activists who are attacking modern production agriculture and our way of life. The best example is activist Eric Schlosser who wrote the 2001 anti-food-industry book *Fast Food Nation*. Even without any scientific credibility, this book ultimately became a bestseller and is now required reading in more than 300 universities in the U.S.

More recently, Schlosser released a rewrite of *Fast Food Nation* titled *Chew On This* that is aimed at teens my age. *Chew On This* perpetuates misleading information about our food system and targets an impressionable audience — school

children. And take it from me, some of my more urbanized classmates are fairly impressionable when it comes to food issues.

Schlosser is making headlines and, what's worse, his publisher Houghton Mifflin is developing curriculum for schools and encouraging them to teach the book. He has been busy making the morning TV talk show rounds, portraying himself as a journalist. However, his references expose him as the true political activist he is. Most references he uses come directly from newspaper clippings, magazines and television segments, certainly nothing scientific.

If that's not enough to get you motivated to become an industry spokesperson, this news certainly will do the job. A fictionalized version of *Fast Food Nation* is in the works and scheduled to be released as a feature film this fall. It will star some of Hollywood's finest, like Avril Lavigne, Kris Kristofferson and Greg Kinnear.

If you want to have shivers run down your back, just check the *Fast Food Nation* movie trailers available on Web sites with ominous warnings such as, "The truth is hard to swallow." One scene shows a fast-food company executive talking with another individual who is telling him that fecal counts in the meat are off the chart. When the executive asks what that means, the response is there's manure in the meat.



Bailey Harsh

In other scenes, fast-food burger flippers are shown dropping burgers on the floor and then serving them to unknowing customers. Given the movie's wild claims and graphic scenes, will consumers remember that the movie is a work of fiction or will they act

on the misinformation by reducing their consumption of beef?

As cattle producers, we must not be afraid to become industry advocates and share the true story about how beef is produced. We know that our beef and America's food supply is the envy of the world. The hard work that begins on family farms across this country results in safe, wholesome and nutritious beef on our plates.

Food safety is the No. 1 priority of the U.S. beef industry. USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) maintains zero tolerance for feces on carcasses. Inspectors check continuously to ensure compliance and reject carcasses if this policy is violated.

Like all agricultural commodities, raw meat can contain bacteria, but over the last two decades, new technologies in meat plants have helped reduce bacteria levels dramatically. Since 1999, the incidence of *E. coli* O157:H7 in ground beef samples tested by USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) has declined by 80%. Center for Disease Control (CDC) data also show that foodborne illnesses are declining correspondingly.

Schlosser's book and the movie claim that fast-food menus are a major factor in the increase of obesity in the U.S. There is no doubt that obesity is a complex problem that is best addressed by living a balanced lifestyle, making good nutritional choices and getting plenty of exercise.

However, University of North Carolina researchers found that in the past 20 years, adolescent obesity rates climbed 10%, but caloric intakes only rose 1%. During the same period, children's activity levels declined 13%. How many city kids do you know who spend a large part of their day

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sitting in front of an Xbox or some other video game?

Fact. The beef we produce is a natural source of nine essential nutrients, which are especially important for the diets of those in the age range targeted by the book.

Fact. There are 29 cuts of beef that meet government guidelines for lean, including favorites such as T-bone steaks and 95% lean ground beef.

Fact. A 3-ounce (oz.) serving of lean beef contributes less than 10% of calories to a 2,000-calorie daily diet, yet it's an excellent source of protein, zinc, vitamin B₁₂, selenium (Se) and phosphorus (P), and a pretty darn good source of niacin, vitamin B₆ and iron.

Fact. On average, Americans consume only 4.9 oz. of food from the meat and bean group per day, while MyPyramid recommends 5.5 oz., based on a 2,000-calorie diet.

Activists like Schlosser jeopardize our livelihoods with their false claims, and their agendas can have serious consumer and political consequences for our industry. Each year, Americans eat, on average, about 65 pounds (lb.) of beef. With movies like *Fast Food Nation* on the horizon, how many pounds of beef will Americans be eating next year and the year after that?

Every day the American population gets a little further away from its rural roots, thus creating a huge need to educate consumers about beef production facts. The beef industry needs to set the record straight on misunderstood issues like animal welfare, antibiotic use, growth promotants and environmental stewardship, but it takes willing spokespeople.

All types of tools and resources are available through breed organizations, state cattlemen's associations, the beef checkoff and Farm Bureau to make our job as spokespeople easy and effective. I want to do my part to ensure that, next year, Americans are eating even more than the current 65 lb. of beef. And if I have my way, at least 64 lb. of that will be *Certified Angus Beef*[®] (CAB[®]).

Tyler Hammett, Tennessee Intermediate II division "Biofuels, An American-Grown Solution"

Have you seen the price of gas lately? Good gracious! I don't know about you, but all I can do is shake my head in disbelief.

Are you aware that in September of 2005 the average price of gas rose to over \$3.00 per gallon, compared to \$1.44 only five years earlier? It is mind-blowing, insane, outrageous, ridiculous, outlandish, odd and even zany to think that fuel prices could get that high. Is there not something more we could do?

One alternative that is now available is hybrid cars. However, before you get your engines started, studies show that gasoline would have to be priced at \$5.60 per gallon, and a driver would have to log at least 15,000 miles per year for more than five years in order for the Toyota Prius or any other hybrid car to be a breakeven proposition.

Other alternatives include public transportation, riding a bike or even walking. For the most part, these are not always feasible alternatives. What if, just what if, there were fuels that our cars and trucks could use that didn't require different engines? What if these same fuels reduced greenhouse gases by 12% to 19%? What if they reduced our dependence on foreign oil? And what if these ideal fuels benefited our nation's economy and the agricultural industry?

I'm here to tell you these fuels do exist. The title of my speech is, "Biofuels, An American-Grown Solution." Hello, my name is Tyler Hammett.

I am sure you are asking: What are biofuels? Why use biofuels? And how can biofuels benefit our American agricultural industry?

Biofuels are fuels made from cellulose biomass resources, including the liquid fuels ethanol, methanol, biodiesel, Fischer-Tropsch diesel, and gaseous fuels such as

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hydrogen and methane. With so many options, where do we begin? The obvious answers are ethanol and biodiesel.

Ethanol, also known as ethyl alcohol or grain alcohol, can be used as an alternative fuel or as an octane-boosting, pollutant-reducing additive to gasoline. In the United States, ethanol is made primarily from corn, but it can also be produced from other feedstocks such as grain sorghum, wheat, barley, potatoes or sugarcane.

The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 have increased the demand for ethanol production in the U.S. annually. In 2005, 81 ethanol plants in 20 states had the capacity to produce nearly 4.4 billion gallons of ethanol. Currently, an additional 28 plants are under construction to add another 1.5 billion gallons of storage capacity.

On the other hand, biodiesel is a liquid fuel that is the result of organically derived oils being combined with alcohol, ethanol or methanol in the presence of a catalyst, thus forming ethyl or methyl ester. Biodiesel can be manufactured from soybean oil, canola oil, waste vegetable oil, micro algae oil or animal fats.

In addition to being a domestically produced, renewable alternative fuel for diesel engines, biodiesel also has positive performance attributes such as increased octane, high fuel lubricity and high oxygen content. Furthermore, it can be used as an extender or substitute for traditional diesel. It does not require any special pumps or equipment, and is much safer to handle, store, and transport with a flash point



Tyler Hammett

greater than 150° C as compared to 77° C for traditional diesel.

Don't hesitate to pull up to the pump; biodiesel has been rigorously and independently tested in virtually every type of diesel engine. The National Biodiesel Board (NBB) reports the tests combine to account for more than 50 million street miles plus intense off-road and marine use. Performance has rated comparably to traditional diesel in all areas from power to efficiency and from hauling to climbing.

In the fight for our environment, how can we ignore the obvious facts offered by ethanol and biodiesel? These are renewable, environmentally friendly fuels that are inherently cleaner than petroleum. Fossil fuel-based emissions are the largest source of man-made carcinogens, and the No. 1 source of toxic emissions, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

So, before you leave here tonight and fill your gas or diesel engines, think about this.

First, biodiesel burns clean, resulting in a significant reduction of pollutants that contribute to smog and global warming. Biodiesel is the only alternative fuel approved by the EPA that has passed every Health-Effects Test, emitting 85% fewer cancer-causing agents than traditional diesel.

Second, ethanol blends have been proven to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in vehicles by 10% to 30%. In 2004 alone, ethanol use in the U.S. reduced CO₂-equivalent greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 7 million tons, which is the equivalent to removing more than 1 million cars from the road.

All of these facts lead me to my last point. How can biofuels benefit our American agricultural industry? Initially, ethanol is made primarily from corn and other agricultural products; demand for these crops is estimated to increase by 2 billion bushels per year by 2012. The U.S. Department of Agriculture also found that an average annual increase of soy-based biodiesel demand would boost total crop cash receipts by \$5.2 billion by 2010.

The opportunity for economic development would increase in rural areas

where the ethanol and biodiesel are made, generating an additional \$2-\$4 billion in net farm income by 2012. In 1997, Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management found that during an average ethanol plant's construction, approximately 370 local jobs are created, and during an ethanol plant's operation, up to 4,000 local jobs are created.

When faced with the fuel problem this country will confront in the near future, these "alternative" fuels, in reality, are not alternatives. We need to take the initiative and fix this problem before it becomes a crisis. The last issue our nation needs is an oil shortage, especially if we have the ability to avoid such a catastrophe. When faced with a problem, you find a solution ... "Biofuels, An American-Grown Solution."

Rebecca Tokach, North Dakota Senior division "American Idol: Beef Edition"

Good evening, folks, and welcome to tonight's show, *American Idol: Beef Edition*. My name is Rebecca Tokach, and I am your host for tonight. As you all may know, last week we crowned a new American Idol. The new idol is Beef Products. Beef Products dominated their way through the rounds of nutrition, safety and convenience. Tonight, we will review how Beef Products have won the hearts of Americans all across our nation.

Nutrition was the first round of *American Idol*. In this round, beef blasted out of the water the myth that it is unhealthy and showed America why beef is an essential part of everyone's diet.

According to the "Continuing Survey of Food Intake by Individuals," 73% of all Americans are not meeting their recommended dietary allowances for zinc (Zn), and 40% of all Americans are suffering from iron deficiencies. These are serious nutrition deficiencies. They can

lead to a decreased attention span, learning disabilities, short-term memory deficiency and decreased problem-solving skills.

Eating beef can help reduce these deficiencies. According to the May 1997 *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, beef is the No. 1 source of protein, iron and zinc. One 3 oz. serving of beef provides 42% of the protein, 14% of the iron (Fe), and 31% of the zinc recommended in most daily diets. Beef is also a great source of riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B₁₂, selenium and phosphorus. Beef will meet the needs of nutrition for healthy living.

Another misconception about beef is that it has more calories, cholesterol and fat than other meats, especially chicken. Poultry is often the chosen meat for low-fat diets. I think it is time we take a tip from Paul Harvey and hear the rest of the story. When choosing a low-fat diet, you should not substitute poultry for red meat, because beef often has the same or less fat, calories and cholesterol than chicken. Skinless chicken breast has 3 grams of total fat, and a skinless

chicken thigh has 9.2 grams of total fat. A 3 oz. serving of lean beef contains between 4.2 and 8.5 total grams of fat. There are seven cuts of meat within this fat range. These leaner cuts of beef contain the words loin and round.

Chicken can actually have more calories and cholesterol than beef. A 3 oz. serving of lean-cut beef can have 30 fewer calories than a serving of chicken. Beef can contain 20 less milligrams of cholesterol

per serving as compared to chicken. This information definitely shows that there are misconceptions about calories, cholesterol and fat in beef.

Not only did beef dominate the nutrition round, but it went on to win the safety round of *American Idol*. America's 1 million cattle producers care greatly about the safety of U.S. beef, which is why American beef is recognized as the safest in the world. The Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) has



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the mission of ensuring that the nation's commercial supply of meat is wholesome, safe and accurately labeled. FSIS requires harvest plants specialized testing for the various types of bacteria, such as *E. coli* and Salmonella.

These standards and procedures greatly reduce the chance of beef contamination. This means that most meat contamination occurs in the home or kitchen setting. Consumers can easily prevent meat contamination if they take a few extra precautions when they are handling meat products. Consumers should always cook their meat to an internal temperature of 160° F. They should also make sure that cooked food products or foods that will be eaten raw are not exposed to raw meat or its juices.

As you can see, with the appropriate precautions beef is safe to eat.

Convenience products was the final round of *American Idol*. Over the past decade, tremendous achievements have been made in the area of beef convenience products. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), in cooperation with

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retailers, wholesalers and packers, has done immense research on beef convenience products, and together, they have developed many new items. Traditional meal preparation has changed drastically as more members of the family hold jobs outside the home. Many busy women and men feel they do not have the time each night to put a hot meal on the table, so they have turned to convenience products.

Consumers have many options to choose from when they are choosing beef convenience meals. According to www.certifiedangusbeef.com, CAB® offers convenience products that can be cooked in less than 30 minutes, such as prime rib, pot roast and beef knockwurst. There are also additional beef products that can be made in less than 10 minutes in your oven or microwave. These products can be found in the grocery store's frozen foods or deli section. The decreased amount of time spent preparing and cleaning up after the meal can justify the increased cost of the convenience products.

Well, folks, as you can see, beef easily dominated all three rounds of *American Idol* this season. Beef proved that it was a nutritious, safe and convenient product. I hope you can all see how beef has won the hearts of Americans all across the nation.

That's all, folks, and I thank you for joining me tonight on *American Idol: Beef Edition*.

