



► Winner of the junior division, Keegan Cassady, answers questions from the judges.

Speaking Out

PHOTOS BY KATIE GAZDA

Winners named in NJAS prepared public speaking contest.

compiled by **Linda Robbins**

The National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) hosts a prepared public speaking contest each year in conjunction with the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS). Junior 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.

First-place winners in each division receive \$125; second-place winners receive \$100; and third-place winners receive \$75. The *Angus Journal* sponsors college scholarships for the top three winners in the senior division. The first-place winner receives a \$1,000 scholarship; the second-place winner receives a \$750 scholarship; and the third-place winner receives a \$500 scholarship.

Congratulations to all the prepared public speaking contest winners.

The first-place speeches from each division follow.

Keegan Cassady, Illinois Junior division “A Better Message”

Let's have some fun. Close your eyes. I'm going to say two words, and I want you to get a mental image. Ready? Close them ...

Farming and Ranching.

Okay, now open your eyes. The mental image you created in your mind is most likely similar to everyone else's here in this room. Unfortunately, this is not the image shared by our friends, neighbors and classmates who

have been removed from the farm. We need to tell a better message.

So, why do we need the right message? First, the population removed from the farm or ranch is growing. A lot of them have a lack of knowledge and are easily persuaded by other groups that portray untruthful messages. Another reason is because of the activist groups, such as influential animal rights groups like PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) and HSUS (Humane Society of the United States). These

groups are well-funded and have a powerful anti-animal agriculture agenda. I'm sure we've all seen those sad commercials on TV that show images of suffering animals. These commercials even tug on my heartstrings. But these commercials were not made about bad people; they just tell only one side of the story.

There is also the debate between organic versus traditional farming, which are simply different methods of caring for livestock. Most of us here care for our animals in a more traditional way, but with either method we choose, we need to be consistent with our message.

How can Angus breeders become more involved in spreading the right message?

- First, we have to educate, and that begins in the classroom. We can offer field trips to farms and ranches, and invite educational speakers to our schools.
- Next, we can target government officials such as senators and representatives, and they can spread our message along to other lawmakers.

► Then we have to reach out to the general public, and we can do this in different ways. There are more casual ways, such as talking to a friend or neighbor, but there are also more direct ways, such as “breakfast on the farm” programs. This is where a farmer or rancher opens up their farm, and the public is invited in to learn about their operation.

The most powerful and effective tool we can use is the Internet, and we can and do use this tool in a number of ways. Examples include social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. I see our message being spread every day on these sites, and it can be very effective. Another way we use the Internet is YouTube. The American Angus Association Public Relations Department is already doing this by creating a series of video clips, called *I am Angus*, which shows the positive side of raising Angus cattle. I feel we should focus on this tool because we can reach millions of people instantly.

We need to be more positive and consistent in telling our story. We work hard every day to keep our animals healthy and safe, and that is the message we should be sharing. We need a better message about how we care for and treat our animals. The one-sided story of animal agriculture is one of our most serious challenges. We have been too quiet for too long. I encourage all of you, as we interact with friends, neighbors and classmates who have been removed from the farm, to not be afraid to tell our story — because our story is worth telling.

**Christiane Wimbish, Kansas Intermediate A Division
“Grass to Gummy Worms”**

Amazing, efficient, awesome. Use whatever adjective that you choose. The beef animal is one of the valuable assets to mankind that God put on the earth.

You see, cattle have a huge advantage over many other species of animals in that they have a rumen in their digestive system. The rumen serves as a fermentation vat so that they can utilize feed such as grass, silage and byproducts.

Not only can cows thrive on these roughage products, they have the ability to graze over terrain that could not be used by traditional farming practices. You might say they can

**“We need to be more positive and consistent in telling our story.”
— Keegan Cassady**

turn the bluestem grass on a steep, rocky hillside in southeast Kansas into a sizzling filet mignon for a New York City restaurant.

However, the cow has a far greater contribution to modern society than furnishing food and fiber

for mankind. Most people don’t realize the magnitude of byproducts that come from cattle that make our lives better.

Cattle byproducts are broken down into three parts: edible, inedible and medical. When a steer weighs 1,200 pounds (lb.) at the packing plant you can expect him to dress about 60%, or 720 lb. will be the carcass weight that is used for meat processing. The other 480 lb. of byproducts will also be processed and used. We use 99% of each animal that goes to the packing plant. Here are just a few examples.

The medical industry relies heavily upon beef byproducts for sources of medications. For example, insulin for the treatment of diabetes is probably the best known pharmaceutical derived from cattle. 7.8% of the population, or 23.6 million people, both children and adults, in the United States alone have diabetes. It takes the pancreases from 26 cattle to provide enough insulin for each diabetic person per year. Without insulin, depending upon the severity of the disease, many of these people could die.

Nitroglycerines are another life-saving pharmaceutical that is required by heart patients in case of emergency until they can get to a doctor.

Epinephrine to treat anaphylactic shock is extracted from the adrenal glands of cattle.

Even the gelatin capsules that contain the medicines that we take come to us from the beef industry. From using bones as a source of calcium and phosphorus to using a cow’s heart valve in a human, new uses in the medical field are being discovered every day.

The construction and manufacturing industry also relies on the cow for products used in their trade. The hide is a well-known byproduct most commonly used for leather and glue, but did you know that the hide also supplies felt, ointments and binders for asphalt?

Tires have stearic acid from cattle, which helps rubber hold its shape under continuous surface friction. A couple of really interesting side notes would be that oftentimes the football is referred to as pigskin, when in reality footballs are made of cowhide.

Also, many artists like to use a “camelhair” brush to paint with, and these are made with the fine hair from the inside of a cow’s ear. In addition, adhesives are used in the building process along with the manufacture of paneling and chipboard. Even many paints have cattle byproducts in them.

Another use of bovine byproducts would be in the cosmetic industry. From soaps and shampoos to bovine collagen to fill in scars, the cow makes us look better, feel younger and, yes, even smell better. Many deodorants, fragrances and perfumes contain cow-origin products.

Even some unlikely food products that most would not recognize as having cattle connections can be surprising. For example, gelatin salads and desserts get the semi-solid form that we are all used to courtesy of bovine byproducts. The same principle would apply to the whole gamut of gummy candy, such as gummy bears, to give them

their soft, chewy texture. From marshmallows to chocolate malts and oleo margarine, the cow can surprise us with her creativity.

You know, you would have to be a really educated animal rights activist to not have any bovine-influenced products in your life. It would take an obsessive

lifestyle to avoid using beef byproducts.

Modern-day technology has allowed mankind to reach far beyond hamburgers, roasts and steaks. When you look at the progress that has been made over the last 60 years, one has to wonder how many other products will be developed in the future.

We already have the knowledge to turn beef tallow into biodiesel for the energy industry. The medical industry continues to expand its use of cattle byproducts, in addition to the food industry’s constant research into products that go far beyond beef.

Yes, the cow plays a huge role in making our lives better every day in ways we probably didn’t even realize; and anything that turns

**“Anything that turns grass into gummy worms and strawberry Jello® has my respect.”
— Christiane Wimbish**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 246



Let Freedom Ring

Speaking Out CONTINUED FROM PAGE 245

grass into gummy worms and strawberry Jello® has my respect.

Esther McCabe, Kansas Intermediate B division “History in the Making”

The rules have changed. One decision changed everything. It took 22 months to sell the first million pounds. In fact, at one American Angus Association board meeting the program was cancelled and then later reinstated. Today, we sell a million pounds every 18 hours. In case you are wondering, I am talking about *Certified Angus Beef*®, or CAB.

Started in 1978 as the very first branded beef program, CAB has grown beyond most people’s wildest expectations. I believe that there are two primary reasons for this. First would be the demand by the consumer for a high-quality and pleasurable eating experience. Second would be the fact that no other branded beef product has the full-time and dedicated staff that *Certified Angus Beef* has behind it.

Can you imagine going to the supermarket and just purchasing soap? Of course not. We have products such as Tide® Cheer®, Oxyclean®, and the list goes on. We become very loyal to certain brands, from Coca-Cola® to Fritos® to Chevrolet. Before *Certified Angus Beef* changed the rules for how beef was merchandised, that’s exactly how beef was sold to consumers — one USDA steak, brisket or roast was equal to the next, much like buying soap, cola or just any car. *Certified Angus Beef* starts at the farm or ranch with the genetics of the animal. CAB then sets a higher standard all the way to the consumer. The trust relationship with the consumer is why CAB is counted on to deliver satisfaction time after time, just like all of our favorite brands.

It took a lot of courage for the Board and staff of the American Angus Association to step out from a commodity-based beef system to a branded beef product that consumers know and trust. But that one decision has completely changed the beef industry as we know it.

High standards

However, not just any animal can produce *Certified Angus Beef*. It starts with the genetics of the animal, the licensing of the packing plant and the criteria to be met as a finished product. First of all, the animal must be at least 51% black-hided and

exhibit Angus characteristics or be enrolled in the AngusSource® Program. After it has met these live requirements, there are 10 carcass specifications that must be met.

They are:

1. The cattle must have a Modest degree of marbling or higher.
2. The marbling must be of medium to fine texture. Marbling is the tiny flecks of fat that you see in your meat. It is the main contributor to beef flavor, tenderness and juiciness.
3. Cattle must be of “A” maturity. This includes cattle ages 9 to 30 months.
4. The cattle cannot have a hot carcass weight (HWC) exceeding 1,000 pounds (lb.).
5. The cattle cannot have a fat thickness exceeding 1 inch (in.). These requirements are to ensure that the cuts do not exceed consumer preferences.
6. They must have a ribeye area of 10-16 square in. This is to ensure consistent sizing and a boxable product.
7. The cattle cannot have a hump on their neck exceeding 2 in. in height.
8. They must exhibit moderately thick or thicker muscling characteristics. These requirements (7 and 8) eliminate any significant Brahman or dairy influence. Research shows that cattle that have a high percentage of Brahman in their genetics tend to compromise the tenderness of the beef.
9. There must be no evidence of internal hemorrhages. These tiny blood spots on the ribeye area tend to have a negative effect on consumer satisfaction.
10. Lastly, no dark-cutting characteristics are allowed. (When an animal becomes excited or stressed slightly before harvest, the glycogen level drops dramatically, possibly resulting in a product that is dry, tacky and very dark in appearance.)

Only about 8% of all beef cattle meet all the necessary requirements. I realize how difficult it is for cattle to

meet all of these requirements since I enter carcass steers in the NJAS each year. I know the challenges of selecting the right genetics and then feeding to a desired optimum weight. I also know the heartache of having a carcass steer that would have been first or

second in the contest place last only because it was a dark cutter. This contest is an excellent example of real-world economics at the National Junior Angus Show.

CAB was the first fresh branded beef product, but it certainly has not been the only one. It has changed the way consumers feel toward branded beef products and opened the way for many others. It has also instilled confidence in the beef producers who purchase Angus bulls. They know they are buying a superior product that will be worth more dollars. A few men made one decision in 1978 that changed the way everyone from farmers and ranchers to consumers think

about the Angus breed. They truly changed the rules.

**“It took a lot of courage for the Board and staff of the American Angus Association to step out from a commodity-based beef system to a branded beef product that consumers know and trust.”
— Esther McCabe**

Hannah McCabe, Kansas Senior Division “The Great Debate”

How about a history lesson? Yes, we will take a look at the old days — say, 100 years ago in Kansas — My great-grandfather Ray McCabe was on a community debate team from our hometown of Elk City, and they would debate other teams from other towns in our area. Of course, with little entertainment available, folks would turn out to watch their favorite team go at it.

I am told, as Ray passed away in the 1960s, that all through his life he loved to argue. A staunch Democrat in a Republican community and even a Republican family, he would take the other side of about any topic a person would want to discuss. And they say it didn’t get better with age!

My stance on the issue of phenotype versus genotype could be compared to Grandpa Ray. I can argue either side of this deal. But, let’s take a deeper look. We’ve all heard comments such as “I don’t want to turn out some show bull on my cows,” or,

“They have a bunch of those carcass breed bulls for sale,” or my favorite, “I placed this heifer last even though I wouldn’t be surprised if she made the best cow in the class!”

I believe this argument goes way beyond showing versus performance or performance versus carcass.

While nearly all cattle end up at a packing plant and serve the same purpose in the end, their lives and environments between birth and slaughter can be very different. A cow in Montana or North Dakota will have a much different life than a cow in Florida or even in the fescue country of Missouri and Arkansas.

Which brings us back to the original question. Which should our breed be focused on, phenotype or genotype?

We have the largest, most influential breed in the country. We need to be thankful that we have this very diverse gene pool that is available to us. No, we do not all need to breed cattle that look exactly alike.

I view this from two perspectives: the breed association and the individual breeder. The American Angus Association has gone far beyond the call of just recording the pedigrees and having some fieldman out there to answer questions and work salerings. Our association’s focus has been and must be upon the genetic makeup or genotypes of the breed.

After all, the mission statement of the American Angus Association is: “To provide programs, services, technology and leadership to enhance the genetics of the Angus breed, broaden its influence within the beef industry, and expand the market for superior-tasting, high-quality Angus beef worldwide.”

Because of the genetic make up of Angus, the American Angus Association has also taken unprecedented steps to help each and every one of us. I would dare say there is no one in the room who has not benefited from the development of *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®). The 10 carcass specifications of CAB clearly are the foundation that holds the program at a level that sets us apart from the rest of the industry.

CAB has changed the way beef is marketed to the consumer and increased the demand for Angus bulls to a level never seen before. All of this has come about because of one decision a few men made in 1978. They truly changed the rules of the industry and if Angus were not genetically advanced to

meet those 10 criteria, the program would have failed.

In the last few years, when the American Angus Association discovered a genetic defect within our breed, it was the Association that overviewed the testing procedures and made the tough decisions in sorting the genotypes that need to be tested. Clearly, along with all of the extra help that they give us through records, EPDs and programs, the primary focus of the American Angus Association is the genetic makeup of the Angus population.

In the true fashion of Grandpa Ray from an individual breeder’s perspective it gets a little more interesting. Let’s go back to the earlier illustration that I used of a cow in the North versus the South and how their lives are very different. A very simple component of this illustration could be broken down to their ability to shed their hair in the spring. Obviously, in the South the slicker haired the cows can get in the spring the better

they get along in the heat. This is a visual or phenotype call — either this cow does shed

or she does not. When we select for the slick-haired cow, we are selecting a genotype that expresses the phenotype that we desire.

There is no difference in selecting a cow with a high-quality udder that is suspended securely and has small teats that will last many years. This is a phenotypic trait that we can select for that ultimately changes the genetic makeup of the cow. We all know

what an udder looks like when the cow’s genetic milk-producing ability far exceeds her udder capacity to deliver that milk.

Let’s go one step deeper. When we select for a carcass trait, say intramuscular fat (IMF), we selected for a higher marbling EPD. The phenotype of a higher marbling EPD is expressed in more IMF in the ribeye muscle. While it is not a phenotype we can evaluate in a live animal with the naked eye, more IMF is the phenotype of the higher marbling EPD.

For many years Angus genetics have dominated the beef industry at an ever increasing rate. There are several reasons for this trend, some of which would be that the Angus cow is a relatively problem-free, high-producing calf factory. The Western states that had been traditionally Hereford dominated for many, many years are now largely black or black/white-faced. And where the cows are of a different breed, whether Charolais in North Dakota or Tiger Stripes in Louisiana, registered Angus bulls are often the breed of choice because they bring so many advantages to the table.

They will sire calves that will go on to be even in color, polled, moderate in frame size and ready to top the market anywhere in the country. These are a phenotypic expression of a genetic marvel that is unequalled in the industry.

Given the tools that he would have had to work with today — such as CAB, EPDs and performance records, Grandpa Ray would have loved to sit down and discuss his stance on which the breed should be focused on, phenotype or genotype. And he would have let you choose.

“When we select for the slick-haired cow, we are selecting a genotype that expresses the phenotype that we desire.”

— Hannah McCabe



► Winning the senior division of the prepared public speaking contest, Hannah McCabe won a \$1,000 scholarship sponsored by the *Angus Journal*.

