

Angus Breeder Attends Elite Cattle Industry Conference

Cody Sankey, Economy, Ind., represents the Angus breed during the Young Cattlemen's Conference.

by Jena McReil, digital editor

Representing the American Angus Association, Cody Sankey participated in the 2016 Young Cattlemen's Conference (YCC) hosted by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA). More than 50 cattle producers from across the country and industry attended the conference. Each year, the Angus Foundation sponsors one young leader to attend on behalf of the Angus breed.

"Throughout the YCC experience, we've had really great interaction with our fellow producers — young people who will make an impact on the industry moving forward," said Sankey, who was elected chairman for YCC's 2016 class. "We've been offered the opportunity to learn about all segments of the beef industry, from the cow-calf operation to the feedyard, and, ultimately, the harvest facility and consumer."

A lifelong cattle producer, Sankey currently lives near Economy, Ind., and raises registered-Angus cattle with his wife, Lindsay. He is the director of key accounts for Biozyme Inc. and holds a bachelor's degree in animal science and a master's degree in ruminant nutrition from Oklahoma State University.

Prior to moving to Indiana, Sankey was manager of the Michigan State University Beef Cattle Center and the livestock judging team coach. Sankey is a fifth-generation cattleman who grew up on the Sankey's 6N Ranch in Council Grove, Kan. His family has the second-oldest registered-Angus herd in the United States with more than 115 years in the registered-Angus business.

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From pasture to plate

NCBA's YCC program is an opportunity for young leaders to gain an understanding of all aspects of the beef industry from pasture to plate and showcase the industry's involvement in policy making, issues management, research, education and marketing.



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Beginning at the NCBA headquarters in Denver, Colo., the group was given an inside look at many of the issues affecting the beef industry and the work being done on both the state and national levels to address these issues on behalf of the NCBA membership.

While in Denver, participants were presented with an organizational overview of NCBA and the Beef Checkoff Program, and CattleFax provided a comprehensive overview of the current cattle market and emerging trends. Visiting Safeway, the participants received a firsthand account of the retail perspective of the beef business and then toured the JBS Five Rivers Kuner feedyard, one of the largest in the nation, and the JBS Greeley packing and processing plant.

From Denver, the group traveled to Chicago, where they visited McDonald's Campus and OSI, one of the nation's premier beef-patty producers. After the brief stop in Chicago, the group concluded their trip in Washington, D.C., for an in-depth briefing on current policy issues, including international

trade and increasing environmental regulations.

"As cattle producers, we feel like we have a grasp on the industry until you step in and sit down in a meeting with the executives from McDonald's. Then you really understand how they can influence the beef industry from a ground-beef standpoint," Sankey said. "Another impact moment is when you step on Capitol Hill, working with trade groups and congressmen and senators who ultimately influence the laws that dictate how we run cattle in this country."

Following the issues update, the participants were given the opportunity to visit one-on-one with members of their state's congressional delegation, expressing their viewpoints regarding the beef industry and their cattle operations. John Deere then hosted a reception in the evening at their office.

The following morning, the group traveled to Aldie, Va., for a tour and barbecue at Whitestone Farms.

"I'd like to thank the Angus Foundation for sponsoring young breeders in our organization to go on this trip," Sankey said. "When you can provide an opportunity for a young Angus breeder to attend this elite conference and tour along with 50 others who will impact the beef industry, it can change everything."

With the beef industry changing rapidly, identifying and educating leaders has never been so important. As a grassroots trade association representing the beef industry, the NCBA is proud to play a role in that process and its future success.

More than 1,000 cattlemen and women have graduated from the YCC program since its inception in 1980. Many of these alumni have served on state and national committees, councils and boards. YCC is the cornerstone of leadership training in the cattle industry.

"My sincere thanks to our generous supporters for their unrestricted charitable gifts to the Angus Foundation, which enable us to make this educational experience possible for Cody Sankey and young leaders like him," says Milford Jenkins, Angus Foundation president.