

# ANCW Sparks Advocacy

National Beef Speakers Bureau reaches out to consumer audiences.

by **Katie Gazda**, editorial intern

**A**t the 2011 Cattle Industry Summer Conference Aug. 1-4 in Kissimmee, Fla., committee meetings and informational sessions were convened for not only the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), but also for its auxiliary counterpart, the American National CattleWomen (ANCW).

Many people fail to realize the impact the ANCW has on the beef industry. Through their initiatives of consumer education and beef promotion, these cattlemen have been making strides for the beef industry outside of the industry itself. America's consumers from coast to coast have benefitted and learned about the goodness of beef from the efforts of the ANCW.

Since its inception in 1952, the ANCW has worked closely with the National Beef Check-Off and National Beef Ambassador programs, along with consumer education, beef promotion, and legislation and industry issues. In 2010, the ANCW received funding for a new Check-Off-sponsored program, the National Beef Speakers Bureau (NBSB).

## The speakers' bureau

The speakers' bureau features 19 women from all regions of the country who have been educated and stocked chock-full of industry knowledge to relate the beef story to the average consumer. The goal of the group is to reconnect consumers with beef production and to make beef an easy choice for meals.

The target audience is referred to as "mealtime decision-makers." Presentations have been given at schools, community organizations and other "mealtime decision-maker" and student groups.

Sarah Bohnenkamp serves the ANCW as NBSB program manager.

"We're here to provide firsthand information," she says. "We have a diverse group of ladies who do that, from college

students to cattlemen who have been around the block a time or two."

Prior to giving presentations, the women selected as speakers undergo an extensive industry and spokesperson training session in Denver, Colo. At the training, the women

polish their skills, anticipate questions and obstacles that may arise from telling the beef story to the public, and gain an overall

network of knowledgeable and passionate women to whom to refer when they don't have all the answers.

On the NBSB website ([www.ancw.org/nationalbeefspeakersbureau.aspx](http://www.ancw.org/nationalbeefspeakersbureau.aspx)), a wide variety of fact sheets and other helpful information is made available for speakers to use in their presentations. However, the resources are not limited to the women in the NBSB. The tools can be downloaded and used by any person hoping to help spread the beef story around their community.

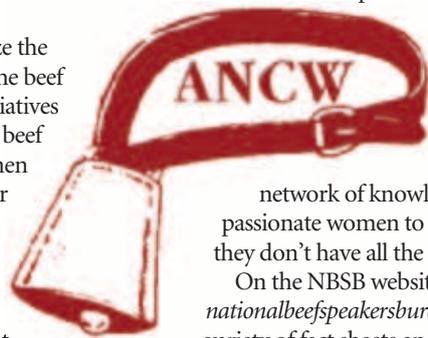
The women who advocate for the beef industry through the NBSB receive no sort of monetary compensation for their efforts outside of gas mileage reimbursement. They are provided with all the resources they might need to speak to a group and a projector to use when traveling, but they are all strictly volunteers.

## Speaking venues wanted

While the program has been successful, the women have found that searching out groups to speak to is a much more difficult task than would be expected.

"We are volunteers; we've got a busy life, and many of us are producers," Bohnenkamp explains. "It's one thing to go to events, but it's another thing to find them."

She encourages cattlemen and women from across the country to identify potential groups for the NBSB, and to help spread the word. "Having that personal connection to someone who can help source events for us is perfect. We'd love help with that."



When at an event, audience demographics, age and frequency of eating beef are measured by the group. Prior to and after the presentation, the audience is given a survey to measure their attitudinal shift toward beef based on the 30 minutes or so that they were educated by a real, in-the-flesh cattlemans. Again, they hope to reach the mealtime decision-maker, who walks up and down grocery store aisles trying to decide what to serve their family for dinner. Thus far they have witnessed to crowds composed of approximately 52% women.

## Join the effort

If you are female, a member of the ANCW, and passionate about advocating for the beef industry, applying to the NBSB could be right up your alley.

"We're looking for cattlemen across the country who would like to formally share their story, and the beef story," Bohnenkamp says. "If there are cattlemen who are curious and would like to be part of the program, we're accepting applications in the fall."

If speaking to large groups isn't your cup of tea, or getting away from the farm to advocate is a difficult task, you can still do your part to promote our industry on a smaller scale. Even the shortest conversation with a knowledgeable, zealous industry person can shift the attitude of a consumer. The most vital thing you can do, both as a cattlemans and as a mealtime decision-maker, is be educated, Bohnenkamp says.

For more information on the National Beef Speakers Bureau or the American National Cattlemen, visit the ANCW website at [www.ancw.org](http://www.ancw.org), or contact Sarah Bohnenkamp, NBSB program manager, at 303-850-3440 or [sbohenkamp@beef.org](mailto:sbohenkamp@beef.org).



**Editor's Note:** Author Katie Gazda is continuing her internship with the Angus Productions Inc. (API) editorial team this fall as she returns to the University of Georgia to work toward her degree.

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