Still Doing It Right

Two feedyards win back-to-back CAB honors.

*by **Miranda Reiman***

Two Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB)-licensed feedlots are demonstrating that quality is not just a trend; it's a continuing journey.

Based on the highest *Certified Angus Beef®* (CAB®) acceptance rates among all licensed partners, the Quality Focus Awards were given to repeat winners this year: Hergert Feeding Co. (HFC) and Irsik & Doll Feedyard (IDFY).
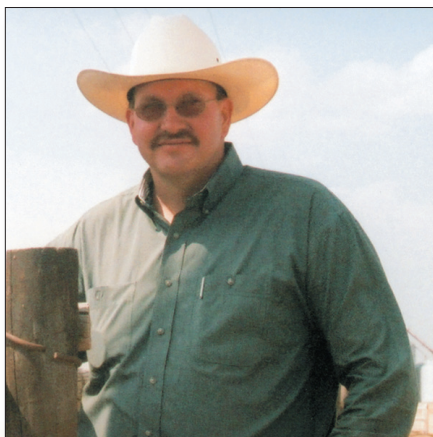
Irsik & Doll
Quality Focus Award
≥15,000 head

More cattle, more quality

In the 15,000-head and above category, IDFY of Garden City, Kan., was recognized for an unequalled commitment to expertly feeding the most and best Angus cattle. Manager Mark Sebranek accepted the award at the CAB annual conference Aug. 17-19, in Seattle, Wash.

IDFY earned a 25.1% CAB acceptance rate, plus 2.1% USDA Prime, on 7,328 cattle. That is nearly 3 percentage points above last year's winning rate. Even more impressive, it was across a 38% greater number of enrolled cattle.

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"This achievement is a direct result of working with our customers," Sebranek says. "Going over their data helps them turn things around on performance, carcass merit, replacements and bull selection." Sebranek has managed the 32,000-head feedlot for six years, during which he's seen producers make positive genetic and management changes.

"The more years they feed, the better their cattle," he says. "The information they get from us and CAB helps increase the CAB acceptance."

The feedlot has partnered with CAB since the inception of the Feedlot-Licensing Program (FLP) in 1998. IDFY earned the Bronze level in CAB's "30.06" program last summer by accumulating data on more than 500 cattle that hit the target of 30% CAB or Prime, with no more than 3% Yield Grade (YG) 4s and 3% carcasses over 975 pounds (lb.).

Sorting and grid marketing are keys to success for the yard that caters primarily to retained ownership cattle customers.

Gary Fike, CAB feedlot specialist, says several Angus breeders rely on IDFY year after year.

"The producers have provided the genetics," Fike says, "but they know Irsik and Doll will manage them so as to capture the most value."

Hergert Feeding Co.
Quality Focus Award
<15,000 head

Precise sorting brings success

HFC, of Mitchell, Neb., posted the highest CAB acceptance rate for the 2005-2006 award year, earning honors for yards with less than 15,000-head capacity.

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10,000-head feedlot in 1995. He took over as manager in spring 2005.

HFC enrolled 3,465 head of cattle, earning a 30.6% CAB acceptance rate, in addition to 5.5% USDA Prime. That was the highest rate among all 69 partners in the FLP.

"Tim is committed to sorting and marketing cattle on a grid," says Paul Dykstra, CAB feedlot specialist. "The feedlot pulls from some terrific Angus-based cow herds in the region."

Owning the majority of the cattle fed, HFC fills its yard primarily from Nebraska and surrounding states.

"We have some customers that, regardless of the year, always send us good cattle. As long as we sort them right, then we're all right," Brost says. "It makes a lot of difference if we've fed the cattle before. If we get too many Yield Grade 4s, the next year we just figure that we need to sell them a little bit quicker."

HFC is one of just three feedlots to earn silver standing in the 30.06 program. Yards receive the distinction after 1,000 cattle meet program specifications. HFC is just 88 head shy of being the first partner to reach gold status, with 2,000 head meeting the same criteria.

"The crew at Hergert Feeding Company has mastered the art of precision," Dykstra says. "They get great results because they have an eye for quality cattle and they know how to gauge the finish on those cattle."