

# Beef Backers Value Recognition

State winners compete nationally for quality honor.

by *Robyn Werk*

**Y**our ranch reputation is on the line with every sale. Imagine how the pressure to excel would increase if you were selling something from the ranch continuously every few minutes.

In the restaurant business, an establishment's reputation is at stake every time a person walks through the door. That's why the managers of *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> (CAB<sup>®</sup>)-licensed restaurants Cool River Café of Denver, Colo., and Dierdorf & Hart's Steak House of Saint Louis, Mo., appreciate being honored for quality.

As in many states, the Colorado and Missouri beef councils annually recognize a "Beef Backer" restaurant that shows

leadership in the menuing and marketing of beef. Last year, 11 CAB-licensed restaurants, including these two state winners, went on to compete nationally.

## **CAB builds credit**

Joseph Madril, proprietor of Cool River Denver, credits CAB in its achieving the Beef Backer status.

"It's an integral part of the restaurant, really, because guests have come to know the quality of the product we serve," Madril says. "We're very proud of that consistent, high quality."

It shows in Cool River promotions.

"We advertise in our menu and also include it as a part of our radio campaign," Madril says. "It has been a part of our marketing since we opened the store."

The Denver site opened in April 2000 as a second location, following success in the Dallas, Texas, suburb of Las Colinas. Cool River Denver has been one of the highest-volume restaurants in Colorado, which Madril attributes largely to CAB. The brand has been an exclusive at all locations since the Texas start in January 1998.

"One of the main reasons we chose and continue to serve CAB is the great history of quality and also the support we get from our local supplier," he says of Denver-based Lombardi Bros. Meats.

"We make a habit of educating our staff through videos, ongoing training and taste tests to ensure they also understand the quality," he says.

## **Confidence booster**

Lou Garesche, managing partner for Dierdorf & Hart's Steak House says, "The consistency of product that CAB guarantees us is the reason we use it."

The Saint Louis-based restaurant has been operating since 1983, using CAB product for many years. It has been CAB-licensed since

2001. Last year's Missouri Beef Backer Award was for achievements as an independent restaurant.

"More than anything else, CAB has increased the confidence of the staff with the guarantee of a good steak every time," Garesche says. "That follows over to the customer's confidence level; they know they're getting a consistent product."

He says winning the award is difficult because there is much competition in Missouri, especially in the Saint Louis area.

"I think you have to show over a number of years that you can consistently provide a quality product to the guest,"

Garesche says. "For that, you get a reputation."

Dierdorf & Hart's CAB promotion is focused within its walls, advertising the brand on its menu and educating the waitstaff to answer customers' questions about the product.

Dawn Thurnau, marketing director for the Missouri Beef Council, credits the restaurant on both counts.

"We think so highly of Dierdorf & Hart's because, not only do they have discriminating taste and serve only the highest-quality beef, but they also do a great job of training their staff to answer questions about their menu items," she says.

It all fits into place based on criteria for the Beef Backer Award. Nominees are judged on the variety of beef items on the menu, percentage of the menu dedicated to beef, customer service, atmosphere and overall meal quality.

"I think the Beef Backer program is an excellent investment of the \$1-per-head beef checkoff program," Thurnau says.

"It thanks and recognizes the restaurants that do an outstanding job of menuing and merchandising," she says, "and it also draws consumers to try their steaks or other beef dishes."

