

# Convention & Trade Show

## National Beef Backers Announced

**N**ational Beef Backer® Award winners in foodservice were announced Feb. 8 by the Beef Checkoff Program at the 2008 Cattle Industry Annual Convention and NCBA Trade Show in Reno, Nev. The Beef Backer Award recognizes chain and independent restaurant operators who excel in menuing and marketing beef.

This year's national winners included

- ▶ Independent: Cherry Valley Country Club, Skillman, N.J.;
- ▶ Chain: Logan's Roadhouse of Nashville, Tenn.; and
- ▶ Innovator of the Year: The Rex Restaurant & Bar of Billings, Mont.

"In 2007, more than 8.66 billion pounds of beef were served in the foodservice channel. It is important that we recognize and thank establishments that are providing outstanding beef-eating experiences away from home," noted California cattleman Bill Jackson, vice chairman of the Joint Foodservice Committee. "The 2007 National Foodservice Beef Backers are doing just that."

Steve Anderson, Logan's Roadhouse senior vice president of marketing, was thrilled to receive the Chain Restaurant National Beef Backer Award. Logan's Roadhouse prides itself on serving "craveable beef choices at incredible value."

Logan's has implemented promotions to showcase beef such as the "Top Your Steak Off" menu category, where guests can customize their steaks as they choose, and the holiday advertisements on their menu that prompt customers to purchase gift certificates for steak.

"Logan's Roadhouse is a great place for steak, first and foremost," Anderson said. "It's featured at both lunch and dinner, and our guests love it. We serve high-quality, aged steaks, hand-cut fresh on the premises. From signature sirloins like the Logan and Onion Brewski to classic cuts such as our filets and ribeyes, Logan's is well-known for great steaks at a great value."

Cherry Valley Country Club, a non-commercial establishment, won the "Independent of the Year" award by offering their patrons quality beef in a variety of applications across all menu day parts. Their exceptional commitment to serving "the best" has kept club members

happy. Michael Giletto, executive chef of Cherry Valley Country Club, said, "As chefs, we look for the best ingredients to create the menus we design. I've found the best quality beef allows me to satisfy any diverse palate."

Giletto's commitment this year was not only to continue to put beef on the menu, but to promote beef to the general public, purveyors, club patrons and fellow chefs. Giletto participated in a television show called, "The Digital Cookbook," demonstrating how to prepare exceptional beef recipes in realistic time. He also shared cooking videos with a children's TV show to help spark kids' interest in cooking with beef.

The Rex Restaurant & Bar captured the "Innovator of the Year" title by preserving The Rex's 25-year-old tradition of serving "the best steak in town" while managing to integrate new cuts like the flat-iron and ranch steak into menu applications.

"Today, like 25 years ago, the Rex menu features beef as our menu mainstay," said owner Gene Burgad. "In addition to the traditional cuts, we are now featuring the newer cuts of beef, offering our customers a wide variety of beef items on the menu. From blackened prime rib to garlic-roasted and bacon-wrapped filets to flat-iron, hanger and ranch steaks, as well as steaks in salads and appetizers, The Rex team is proud of their diverse, beef centered menu."

Gene and head chef David Maplethorpe believe in beef. "It is such a huge part of our Montana economy, and we are passionate about bringing quality beef to our Montana community," he said.

### First Retail Beef Backers named

The Beef Checkoff Program announced the winners of the first national Retail Beef Backer® Awards program. Harris Teeter, Foodmaster Supermarkets and The Kroger Co. were named for their commitment to outstanding beef marketing and merchandising programs.

"The Retail Beef Backer Awards Program is one way beef producers can show their appreciation to retailers for the exceptional work they do to increase

beef demand," said Don Stewart, an importer from Highland Park, Ill., and chair of the beef checkoff's Joint Retail Committee. "We are excited to award these winners for their hard work over the last year."

The 2007 award winners are:

- ▶ Chain (11+ stores): Harris Teeter (166 stores), based in Matthews, N.C.
- ▶ Independent (<11 retail stores): Foodmaster Supermarkets (10 stores), based in Chelsea, Mass.
- ▶ Innovator (This award, for an innovative beef support program or product merchandising program that succeeded in increasing beef demand, will be chosen from all submissions): The Kroger Co. (2,400 stores), based in Cincinnati, Ohio, for their launch of the flat-iron steak.

Retail Beef Backer Award winners are selected based on their excellent merchandising of beef at the meatcase. A third-party judging panel also took into consideration the retailers' tie-ins with beef checkoff-funded programs such as Easy Fresh Cooking® labels, Beef Training Camp, Summer Grilling promotions, the Beef Value Cuts program and on-pack nutrition labeling.

Applicants are also judged on retailer-originated beef promotions that focus on increasing beef demand among their customers. Such programs include outstanding beef promotions, co-marketing promotions and customer education programs.

"We were very impressed with the 2007 contest submissions and how retailers worked at increasing beef demand by utilizing beef checkoff funds. Their dedication to this industry only helps us further our work toward the Long Range Plan goal of increasing beef demand by 10% by 2010," Stewart added. "We welcome all retailers to submit an application for the 2008 contest."

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