

Product. Integrity. People.

National CAB conference connects those who grow with those who sell.

by Jennifer Kiko



“Step back and ask yourself a simple question,” said Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) President John Stika. Addressing a crowd of more than 400 gathered for the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand’s annual conference, he asked, “Why are we here?”

Product. Integrity. People. The answer hasn’t changed since the same question was asked at the brand’s inaugural conference in 1984. Founder Mick Colvin said the program’s annual conference was a time

to celebrate the brand, its successes and its partners.

At the 2007 event, conducted Sept. 13–15 in Savannah, Ga., Stika noted the year’s achievements — including four months with record sales and the strongest three-month (June, July, August) sales period in the brand’s 29-year history.

“That’s exciting stuff ... That’s valuable proof of your success,” Stika said. “As I look at the state of the brand, it is growing supply,

► **Above:** The CAB brand’s new trade and consumer campaigns were unveiled. The ads feature industry experts who know great taste.

growing sales and growing awareness. The program has never been in a stronger supply position than it is today,” Stika said. “But we are not here to celebrate the CAB brand’s successes. We are here to celebrate your successes with the CAB brand.

“The brand has a history that is second to none, with grassroots efforts from producers to consumers. The product is key to the brand, but the brand is bigger than just the product,” Stika noted. “It’s also about the people and the integrity. We want to be part of something bigger than ourselves. And it’s the people — you — who draw us together. This is a time for those who sell product to connect with those who grow the product. It is our responsibility to make those connections and tell consumers the story,” Stika said.

Face change, embrace history

Taking his cue from Stika, noted author and lecturer Robert Kriegel also questioned the audience. “How do you win and keep winning in a changing environment?”

Kriegel is known for his bold and innovative strategies for keeping ahead of the changes and challenges in today’s marketplace. He is an author, all-American



► Ted Simmons, legendary advertising executive for Jack Daniel’s Tennessee Whiskey, discussed how to build a trusted global brand.

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athlete, pioneer in the field of sports psychology and former advertising executive.

“Some people are winners,” he told the audience. “The reason they stay winners is because they are always looking to add new dimensions to their game. Companies that win and keep winning are not those that respond quickly to change; they invent the change.”

Kriegel's advice: Given that fear prevents change and new ideas, and habits keep people from changing, get in the habit of changing.

Ted Simmons, legendary advertising executive for Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey, discussed how to build a trusted

“The more data that can flow up and down the chain, the more progress we'll all make.”

—Kevin Yon

global brand with a single selling message. Simmons has nurtured the appeal of advertising for Jack Daniel's since 1967.

Jack Daniel's whiskey has been produced drop by drop in rural Lynchburg, Tenn., (population 361) since Daniel founded his distillery there in 1866. Today, more than 8.5 million cases sell annually around the world, and that success inspired Simmons' words of wisdom.

Simmons says to find out what consumers value about the brand. Then celebrate it with consumers. “Start with a great product,” he says. “Find a great way to tell people about it. The rest will take care of itself.”

Trust the experts

CAB unveiled its new trade and consumer advertising campaigns at the conference. The trade ads feature representatives from all sectors of the industry. The consumer ads feature three “flavor experts” — a chef, rancher and meat cutter — who explain their confidence in the brand.

The ads prompt consumers to trust the experts who know great taste. The campaign includes print, outdoor and radio ads emphasizing a tagline, “The brand experts trust.” Ad copy focuses on key marketing points identified in a nine-month research project.

Consumers identified most often with the following statement: “The *Certified Angus Beef* brand is a cut above USDA Prime, Choice and Select.” The complete campaign is now available to CAB partners.



► “Thank you for allowing my family to stay on the farm and do what we love,” Angus producer Kevin Yon told attendees of CAB's 2007 national conference.

Partners speak

The conference also included several breakout sessions featuring industry leaders and their proven strategies for success. Angus producer Kevin Yon, Ridge Spring, S.C., participated in a brand success panel. Addressing brand partners from all aspects of the industry, Yon said, “Each one of us represents a very important piece of the chain. As a producer, I say thank you. Thank you for allowing my family to stay on the farm and do what we love.”

“The more data that can flow up and down the chain, the more progress we'll all make. Thank you for creating demand. It is up to us as Angus producers to meet that demand. As we cooperate and work together with the greatest branded beef program in the world, we will have great success.”

CAB's Al Kober, retail director, said there is not a quick secret to success in the retail business. If there were, it would be Q-I-C, meaning quality, integrity and commitment. Quality: focus on the quality of the CAB brand. Integrity in everything you do. Commitment: if a retailer supports the brand, it will support the business and bring success.

Scholarship support

Garrett Lampe, Scott City, Kan., a 2007 Colvin Scholarship recipient, was in attendance to thank CAB partners for their continued support.

“I have a love for Angus cattle and the Angus industry,” Lampe said. “My grandpa



► The annual golf tournament is a way to raise money for the Colvin Scholarship Fund. Next year's title sponsorship was auctioned to Palmer Food Service of Rochester, N.Y., for \$7,000.

gave me my first Angus heifer. The gift was more than a heifer. It was a dream — to have my own cattle. It was the gift of desire — to be anything I want to be. It was also an opportunity — to mold my future and be involved in the largest breed category in the world.

“It is because of the *Certified Angus Beef* brand that the Angus breed is the most popular breed in the world,” Lampe said. “It was a great honor to win this scholarship and an honor to speak on behalf of the other scholarship winners. You are making an investment in the future of the industry.”

An auction and charity golf outing, sponsored by the Smithfield Beef Group, raised nearly \$25,000 for the Mick Colvin Scholarship Fund, which supports scholarship opportunities for future beef industry leaders. The 2008 golf event title sponsorship was purchased for \$7,000 by Palmer Food Service, Rochester, N.Y.

Five scholarships totaling \$7,500 will be awarded in January to junior or senior college students demonstrating a commitment to the beef industry through the pursuit of a meat science, food science, animal science, marketing, business, communications, journalism, or other degree related to the beef industry through activities and curriculum. Applications are available at www.certifiedangusbeef.com/press/csfi/index.php. The deadline is Dec. 17.

Awarding commitment

Awards were presented to retail, foodservice, international, value-added products and

supply development partners demonstrating excellence in sales, marketing and integrity. The 2008 annual conference will be in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, Sept. 11-13, 2008.



► Robert Kriegel, a leading authority on change and human performance, was a keynote speaker.



► Colvin Scholarship recipient Garrett Lampe thanked the crowd for supporting tomorrow’s leaders.