

# The Original Cooks



► **Left:** Paul Vaassen (right) and Don Greiman once again sported their authentic Western attire, and cooked over a campfire on another warm day.

► **Right:** Greiman used his “multipurpose knife” to chop onions and potatoes into the skillet while Vaassen formed hamburger patties.

Story & photos by **Mathew Elliott**

**O**n a hot, humid day 25 years ago, the first-ever Cook-Off was hosted in conjunction with the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines, Iowa. With this year’s NJAS returning to Des Moines, and the Auxiliary-sponsored All-American *Certified Angus Beef*® Cook-Off celebrating its 25th anniversary, some special guests showed up.

Marillyn Schlutz of Columbus Junction, Iowa, entered that first contest along with several other adults from Iowa. Better known at this year’s event as Mrs. Claus, she was back with her lasagna, giving samples to all the good girls and boys.

Paul Vaassen of Dubuque, Iowa, and

Don Greiman of Garner, Iowa, were also there 25 years ago in the 106° F heat. Then president of the Iowa State Fair Board, Greiman focused on getting electric stoves, tables and anything else needed to the Cook-Off area. Vaassen, along with George Pfander of Bedford, Iowa, entertained the group that day as they cooked over a campfire with authentic Western wool shirts and attire while out in the sun.

Pfander passed away last year, but Vaassen and Greiman recreated that hot day 25 years ago at this year’s NJAS.

Vaassen and Greiman once again sported their authentic Western attire, and cooked over a campfire on another warm day.

Greiman used his “multipurpose knife” to chop onions and potatoes into the skillet while Vaassen formed hamburger patties.

The two sat by the fire and offered samples of “some quality CAB meat” to those who passed by and jokingly asked if they were too late to enter the Cook-Off competition inside as they recreated Cook-Off history.

Stopping by the campfire after the 2008 Cook-Off concluded was Cook-Off co-chairman Anne Patton Schubert. She has been a co-chairman for 25 years, witnessing the increased interest, creativity, knowledge and persistence that the Cook-Off has fostered.





► **Above:** Marilyn Schlutz, better known as Mrs. Claus for the week, entered the first Cook-Off, along with some friends from Iowa. This year she was back with her lasagna, giving samples to all the good girls and boys.

