



Winners on the Rail

National carcass steer contest pays off for Angus juniors.

by *Christina Harp*

Each year, Angus youth enter steers in the carcass contest at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) to gain real-world insight into the beef industry outside of the showring. The carcass steer contest at the 2007 NJAS in Tulsa, Okla., consisted of 35 steers owned by 29 juniors.

Glen Mommsen, De Witt, Iowa, owned the grand champion carcass steer entry, which was sired by O'Neill's Expedition. The steer weighed in at 1,239 pounds (lb.) and had a carcass weight of 760 lb. The carcass had a dressing percentage of 61.34 and a ribeye area measuring 13.2 square inches (sq. in.). It qualified for the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand and had a USDA Yield Grade (YG) of 2.09 and Quality Grade (QG) of high-Choice.

"I knew what to look for and chose a calf with a sire who had the right EPDs (expected progeny differences) and carcass traits," Mommsen said of his second time entering a carcass steer and winning the top award.

Mommsen says he plans to use his premium money to attend the Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) Conference in Athens, Ga., and invest the remainder in the family farm.

Cullen Walsler, Minnesota Lake, Minn., entered the reserve grand champion carcass steer. The steer, sired by TC Foreman 016, had a live weight of 1,119 lb. and a carcass weight of 720 lb. The carcass had a dressing percentage of 64.34 and an 11.3-sq.-in. ribeye. It graded low-Prime, YG 3.00.

Clinton Grissom, Seminole, Okla.; and James Pfeiffer, Mulhall, Okla., owned the grand champion state carcass group representing Oklahoma. Reserve grand champion state carcass group honors also went to Oklahoma juniors. Team members included Grissom and John Pfeiffer, Mulhall, Okla.

The carcass steer contest was established in 1985 in an effort to increase awareness among junior Angus members of the

important role that Angus cattle play in the beef industry.

"Selling the steers on a grid-pricing schedule means getting paid based on how the cattle perform, instead of market price," said Clint Walenciak, CAB packing director. "Learning which cattle to select provides juniors with a real-world marketing experience from a genetic standpoint."

The top 10 entries received cash prizes, in addition to the \$50 given to all qualifying entries. Carcasses must have a quality grade of USDA Choice or USDA Prime in order to qualify for the \$50 premium. Ten carcasses met CAB standards in this year's contest, receiving an extra 25% in premiums. In addition, two carcasses graded Prime. Walenciak said the percent of CAB and Prime carcasses in this year's group were much higher than the national averages, with 28.6% qualifying compared to the current program average of 17%.



PHOTOS BY MATHEW ELLIOTT

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