

2007 National Angus Conference & Tour

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Supplying the Brand

by **Troy Smith**

PEORIA, ILL. (Aug. 29, 2007) — The American Angus Association founded the Certified Angus Beef (CAB) program in 1978 to promote the value of the Angus breed as a source of high-quality beef and to address the problem of quality inconsistencies. It became the largest and most successful specification-based, branded beef program in the world. Yet, among some consumers, there is not a clear understanding of what CAB is.

During the National Angus Conference, CAB Vice President of Business Development Mark Polzer explained that while CAB was founded first, more than 60 branded beef programs currently exist. Among those, 46 programs source beef from cattle of Angus influence and proclaim “Angus” on their labels.

“So we face the challenge of Angus confusion,” Polzer says.

However, CAB represents annual sales in excess of 570 million pounds per year, accounting for more than 86% of high-quality (Modest or higher marbling) Angus-influenced beef. Consumers who try it do recognize the difference, Polzer says, citing an 86% call for more among those exposed to the brand. Consumer dissatisfaction with CAB product is limited to one in 50 eating



►The recipe for CAB’s success is the program’s science-based specifications, says Mark Polzer, CAB vice president of business development.

experiences, compared to one in 13 for commodity Choice and one in six for commodity Select beef.

The CAB brand boasts the greatest availability, being produced in 29 licensed packing facilities. Among the more than 13,000 CAB business partners are distributors, retailers, foodservice companies

and restaurants that provide product to consumers in more than 30 countries.

Polzer says the recipe for success is the program’s science-based specifications. Currently, about 17% of carcasses from Angus-influence cattle are accepted. The goal is to achieve a 20% acceptance rate while adhering to strict specifications.

“Another challenge is the need for more supply,” Polzer states.

People are surprised to learn that CAB is a nonprofit organization, funded through collection of a 2% commission packers pay on pounds of branded product sold.

“We really have a tiny budget, so we focus our marketing efforts on target areas; usually two per year,” Polzer says.

Along with regional advertising, CAB personnel provide chef demonstrations and cooking classes at food shows, along with other educational programs through the annual CAB conference and special workshops. Design services, including signage and menu design, are provided to licensed retailers and restaurants. Educational information is also made available through the CAB web site, www.certifiedangusbeef.com.



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