



Fall is busy at CAB, too

By Tracey Erickson, CAB Vice President, Marketing

For many, fall means weaning; for others, a new calving season. Some harvest crops and otherwise prepare for the winter ahead. For the *Certified Angus Beef*® brand (CAB®), this fall has been about some big events, all aimed at adding value to your cattle through product sales.

Winner, winner CAB dinner

Each fall, the brand honors a few top quality Angus producers and feedlots in the U.S. in conjunction with its annual conference.

This year winners traveled to Sunriver, Ore., September 20-22 to accept their awards and interact with professionals from every sector of the beef business. They also enjoyed events like the first ever People's Choice Burger Bash, listening to nationally renowned speakers and dinner cooked by some of the top CAB chefs in the country.

Congratulations to the following ranches and feedlots:

- **Seedstock Commitment to Excellence:** Rancho Casino and Dal Porto Livestock, Brentwood and Denair, Calif.
- **Commercial Commitment to Excellence:** Taylor Ranch, Elk City, Okla.
- **Progressive Partner Award:** Gregory Feedlot, Tabor, Iowa
- **Large Feedlot Partner of the Year:** Keeling Cattle Feeders, Hereford, Texas
- **Small Feedlot Partner of the Year:** Will Feed Inc., Cozad, Neb.
- **Quality Focus Award <15,000 head:** Osborn Farms, Savannah, Mo.
- **Quality Focus Award >15,000 head:** Pratt Feeders, Pratt, Kan.

Ranch, meat, sales education rolled into one

You don't hear of too many September graduations. But then again, there aren't that many MBA programs that consist of ranch visits, meats labs and sales sessions.

CAB launched its Master's of Brand Advantages program in late 2010, and the first class received their degrees at the annual conference in Sunriver, Ore., in September. The second class is in progress.

"Meat experience in sales is not as in-depth as it used to be," says Deanna Walenciak, CAB marketing director. "As our industry has changed, there are not as many people working their way up through the cut shop to sales."

The void makes people less prepared to face sales objections or confidently sell a premium product. CAB set out to change that through an intensive, hands-on course that includes ranch, feedlot and packing plant visits; a meats lab and a sales session.

Berry Bortz, who runs CB Farms near Preston, Kan., with his wife Carla, hosted a handful of the students this summer.

"We felt if they wanted to take the time to learn about our products, we owed it to the industry, and those people in particular, to tell them the truth," he says. "We do have a good story to tell."

Walenciak says, "If you know the beef industry inside and out, you'll be better at selling beef. If they feel educated on the industry, they will become more valuable as a consultant to their customers."

Education & culinary center

A 7,000-square-foot facility in Wooster, Ohio was recently purchased by its adjacent neighbor, and renovation will soon transform it into the CAB Education and Culinary Center.

Brent Eichar, Senior Vice President of Operations, says the Center should open by January, allowing the brand to provide its 12,300 retail and foodservice partners better hands-on training.

It will include a large, state-of-the-art kitchen and meat processing area, where CAB chefs and beef experts can work side-by-side with licensed partners.

That will help them to "continue growing their success with our brand," says Eichar. "We'll be able to break down a side of beef to examine muscles and their relationship to tenderness and palatability, then test those cuts with different preparation methods."

The facilities will be designed to support programs like retail case merchandising, subprimal fabrication, creative menu planning and signature grind development, says Eichar. "It will ultimately allow us to provide interactive and innovative programs for the advancement of our partners, who continue to set the bar for premium beef." 🍖

