

I'm writing this just as we're preparing to leave for the NJAS. It looks as though Missouri will have 30 head of cattle and around 20 Jrs. participating in the showing and in contests during this week. By the time you read this all of it will be history... I sure hope it was a good week for all. Congratulations to the Missouri kids for giving it their best.

On the farm the crops are looking good, haying is coming along, spraying is nearly done, calves are growing well, AIing is complete and the bulls are turned out. Seems like a great time to leave for awhile and go to Pennsylvania! I also just wrote the speech I'll de-

liver to the delegates in hopes that they will cast their vote for me to serve them on the NJAA board of directors. I have had much respect and admiration for those that have worn the Green Jacket ahead of me and I aspire to inspire just as they have.

Closer to home, I encourage you all to be writing down all of your show winnings from the summer and to compile them for your Bronze and Silver awards. This will make it much easier as you apply for scholarships and such when you are ready for them. I wish you the best in all that you do. Keep working, keep smiling and encourage those around you. See you at the Missouri State Fair! 🍷

From your Advisor...

By Jeff & Pam Eagleburger, MJAA Advisors

Summer is going by so fast this year. Brittany came home from FFA Camp today and we're leaving for NJAS in the morning. When we return, Nathan will leave the next day for the Missouri Junior Angus Academy. After that, it will be time for the Ozark Empire Fair, LEAD and the Missouri State Fair...then back to school. Wow, time does fly when you're having fun!

By the time this edition goes to print, the 2011 National Junior

Angus Show will have come and gone. We hope you all had a safe trip and fabulous week. Congratulations Missouri Juniors on your successes with contests and in the show ring. We would also like to congratulate all of our scholarship recipients. Thank you for working hard to keep our state aisle clean.

We hope to see you all at the Missouri State Fair. We will have a meeting following the 4-H & FFA shows as usual. Please plan to attend.

Feel free to contact any of the advisors if you have questions. (Each advisor's contact information is available on the State Jr Ass'n page of www.NJAA.info) 🍷

BIG, BAM boost beef demand

Checkoff-funded program finds alternatives to thin steaks for larger carcasses.

By Wyatt Bechtel

A dry, flavorless and thinly cut steak can be enough to sour anyone's taste for beef.

"There is no doubt that cattle are getting bigger, and that will continue," says Terry Houser, Kansas State University meat scientist. "I don't think we are going to produce smaller rib-eyed cattle anytime soon or start selecting cattle for that trait."

Still, demand for beef looks bright, thanks to new cutting methods developed to tackle the issue of increasing carcass size and its effect on the eating experience.

Some of these methods have been brought to market by the Beef Checkoff's Retail Marketing Team and its Beef Alternative Merchandising (BAM) program.

BAM came about through "listening to what consumers want," says Trevor Amen, channel marketing manager for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), contractor for the Beef Checkoff. "Through the years, the Retail Marketing Team's cutting tests and focus groups put the product in front of consumers to really see how they interact and what their purchase interest would be."

According to Kari Underly, author of "The Art of Beef Cutting," who worked with the team, consumers appreciate cooking tips and detailed recipes. They also prefer smaller cuts with less trim. "The right-size portion for many of them seems to be a 4-ounce (oz.) portion," she says.

That might seem discouraging, considering the impetus was how to deal with larger carcass size, but it actually opens more doors in beef marketing, Underly says.

In research, new cuts were taken from the ribeye, strip and top butt of typical 700- to 800-pound (lb.) carcasses as well as those pushing the limits at 1,000 to 1,100 lb.

"We wanted to make sure BAM would work well financially on both sizes," Underly explains. It did, and served to create a wider range of choices for consumers. "It's an add-on to what retailers were already featuring."

A TOP CUT

The research dovetailed with efforts of the Beef Checkoff-funded Beef Innovations Group (BIG). Prior to the concept of alternative cutting techniques, retailers had trouble marketing quality cuts from the top butt; now the trouble is simply keeping enough of it in the meat case.

"The top sirloin butt has certainly been a victory for us," says Mark Gwin, Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) research and development manager.

Also a member of BIG, Gwin says retail and consumer buy-in has been strongest for the alternative offerings from this wholesale cut, among all the middle meats.

Three retail cuts were developed through BIG: baseball steaks, culotte steaks and the filet of sirloin. "Any trimmed pieces can be used as medallions or fajita meat," Gwin adds.

Top sirloins used to be cut exclusively into large steaks with no focus on the multiple muscle complexes within, creating tougher areas within the cut when cooked, he says.

The new cuts are thicker and pinpoint where the muscle grain changes.

"We are giving people the means to cut these muscles into thicker steaks to give them a more succulent experience," Gwin says.

Revise the ribeye

"With the ribeye, we're removing that cap muscle, the spinalis dorsi," says Mark Polzer, CAB vice president of business development.

continued on page 22