



Opportunities abound

We love it when good things come together. Autumn is full of those instances, from research that supports our high-quality beef target to healthy weaned calves to Angus bull sales—there's even a newly designed web resource for you and your customers. Check out what's going on at *Certified Angus Beef LLC®* (CAB®) this month.

CAB unveils new producer website

CABpartners.com has a new layout and pictures, but mainly it just works better. "It's much easier to get around," says Laura Nelson, industry information specialist for the company.

Backed by user data and the latest web tools, the new site leads cattlemen through a topical approach to producing and getting paid for the best beef. Pages include management, health, genetics, nutrition and marketing—all containing related information, she says.

If you're looking to find a CAB-licensed feedlot or want to know how to top the auction market with your Angus calves, for example, click "Marketing." If you want to see which expected progeny differences (EPDs) make the most difference in CAB acceptance, click "Genetics."

"There is plenty of new information, but all of the tools and calculators from our old site are still there," Nelson says. The Calf Price and Fed Cattle Breakeven calculators are in the marketing section, along with seedstock marketing tools and tips on how to build a resume for your calves.

"We can feature our latest news more prominently now," she adds. "There's even a video library filled with informational clips from ranchers, feeders, researchers and allied industry folks."

Other new items include a social media bar at the bottom of the page that points users to the Black Ink blog, Twitter feed and Facebook page. Rotating features along the left-hand side of the home page point to "spots of interest," and you can contact CAB team members listed under "About Us."

Although the entire site is rearranged and the look is different, the address is the same as it's always been: www.CABpartners.com.

The Taste Drive

There's that one "big event" of the year. You put everything you've worked for out in front of your customers to see, and you hope it's successful.

"To most seedstock producers it's their production sale. To the Value-added Products (VAP) team, it's our annual Taste Drive," says division director Brett Erickson. "All year we work towards having our partners ready to showcase their CAB value-added products at our Annual Conference in the fall."

There's developing the products and marketing material, licensing processors and coordinating details with the resort's chefs,

kitchen and event crews.

"We look for ways to make it more productive and valuable to conference attendees," he says. "A year's worth of work, time, energy and dollars for three hours of controlled chaos—all with the hope that the retailer, foodservice distributors, international folks, producers and processors all walk away saying, 'Wow, that was a great Taste Drive.'"

Proof of greatness comes when processors tell the VAP team about directly-linked sales.

"That's when we know we've done our job, when we have a satisfied customer," Erickson says. "Just like the seedstock producer who gets a call from his customer saying that bull did a great job servicing his females, and the calves topped this fall's market. That's what keeps them coming back."

Yum: That buttery, beef-fat flavor

If meat scientist Daryl Tatum goes out for a "knock-your-socks-off" beef dinner, it's going to include high levels of marbling.

New research by the Colorado State University professor points out the links between key sensory attributes and quality grades.

"Marbling has kind of gotten a bum rap from a lot of people saying it really doesn't predict much," Tatum says. "But across the full range, it has predicative capabilities. When you can measure it precisely, it does a really good job."

The recent work, funded by The Beef Checkoff and commissioned by the industry's Joint Product Enhancement Committee, looked at camera-based quality grade calls and their correlation to eating experience.

A trained panel evaluated steaks from carcasses that were camera graded into seven different marbling scores. Tenderness and "buttery, beef-fat" flavor accounted for 91% of the variation in overall sensory experience; in turn, 40% of tenderness variation and 71% of variation in that desirable flavor was due to marbling score.

Tatum says "the beef trade has it figured out. Prime is its own category and the upper two-thirds of Choice is another category by itself."

The probability of a positive eating experience within the Prime grade is 98% to 99%. With modest and moderate amounts of marbling, the threshold for many premium Choice brands like CAB, the chance of a good eating experience is 82% to 88%.

That's in stark contrast to low Choice at 62% or Select at 29%.

"When you get to that premium Choice zone, there's not much wrong with the beef in most people's opinion," Tatum says. "It's more of an insurance policy than anything. You're not going to get a junk piece of meat once you get up at those levels." 🍖