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SERVING UP QUALITY

2021 CAB Board chairman has stake in quality beef product from start to finish.

by Kylee Kohls, *Certified Angus Beef*

From the moment he heads to the barn in the morning till he closes the Hickory House Restaurant at day's end, Jonathan Perry (J.P.) is committed to the beef business.

The 2021-2022 chairman of the Certified Angus Beef Board of Directors brings a unique perspective to the table.

By day, he's a cattleman. For 23 years, he's been general manager of Deer Valley Farm, a 6,500-acre operation home to 2,000 registered Angus cows and 1,500 acres of crops.

At night, Perry is meat cutter and cook at Hickory House Restaurant in Pulaski, Tenn., which Perry has owned with his wife, Jackie, since 2014.

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Sustainable direction

Angus cattle haven't always filled Deer Valley's pastures. Sixteen years ago, Perry and Fred Clark, owner of Deer Valley Farm, transitioned the herd to *The Business Breed*. They haven't looked back.

"The need for Angus genetics was growing daily, and the demand for our product through Certified Angus Beef was taking over every other breed in the industry," Perry says. "We decided that if we were going to be sustainable, stay here for the long haul, have a program that was productive and could stand on its own two feet, we had to venture into the Angus breed and change directions."

Clark — Perry's mentor and friend — reminds Perry often: "Just because we've done it that way before, doesn't mean we have to keep doing it that way."

Serving up CAB

Navigating the pandemic as a cattleman and restaurateur was "eye-opening" to how fast things are changing, Perry says.

"We have to be more prepared, more adaptable and more willing to embrace change to serve that consumer in any way possible," he says. "We have to make cattle practical and sustainable, but we also have to continue to improve carcass yield, carcass merit and a high-quality product so that we can hold our place in the market."

He says he's gained an appreciation for the evolving marketplace since opening the Hickory House in 2014, and even more so in the last year serving as CAB Board chairman.

"Certified Angus Beef brings quality product into the marketplace by supporting licensees and by putting the right product in the right place to make people successful in the foodservice and retail industries," Perry says.

The principles of integrity and dedication to quality driving his farm are carried into the restaurant and the grocery store through the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand.

"It means everything for us to serve *Certified Angus Beef* in our restaurant. One, it's a product that we had such a stake in producing and developing. And two, we know that our customer is getting the most consistent, high-quality eating product in the industry," he says.

His guests' eating experience is something Perry takes personally. He doesn't need a scale to perfectly slice the 14-ounce ribeye off the roll in the back of the restaurant. It's simply second nature.

"The restaurant is my haven away from the world," he says. "It's been a real labor of love."

Looking forward

A student of the world around

him, Perry surrounds himself with people he can learn from and brings others under his wing to learn alongside him, says John Stika, CAB president. J.P.'s bright and easygoing personality draws others to conversations where both are sure to leave with a new perspective or piece of knowledge.

"He's an ambassador for the Angus breed, Certified Angus Beef and all those who serve the beef business, constantly reminding cattlemen and culinary colleagues of all the brand has to offer," Stika says.

Grateful to have met folks throughout his year of service, Perry says he is ever-confident in the CAB brand's ability to evolve through future changes in demands and resources.

"They are a wealth of knowledge and resources," Perry says of the CAB staff, "and they're there to help you every step of the way."

It has been a challenging, yet rewarding year, not unlike a busy night at the Hickory House. After dinner's served and the lights go out at the restaurant, Perry's reminded why he serves: "Good food, friends and fellowship. That's what it's all about." |

Editor's note: Kylee Kohls is a communications specialist for CAB. Jonathan Perry was re-elected CAB Board Chairman at the Board's Nov. 8 meeting following the Angus Convention of Delegates in Fort Worth, Texas.



Perry says he loves serving CAB at their restaurant because it is a product his family has a stake in and it provides a consistent, quality eating experience.