

Grow Trust, Demand



Consumer-perspectives panel explores new avenues for CAB to meet consumer expectations.

by Peyton Schmitt, American Angus Association

It's no secret that today's consumer expects more than ever before. A panel of beef industry experts agreed: cattlemen are already doing plenty of things right. The challenge, they said, is connecting consumers with ranchers so they are both reassured.

During the 2022 Angus Convention, beef industry experts discussed ways producers can meet rising expectations. The consumer-perspectives panel, sponsored by Zoetis, was moderated by Nicole Erceg,

Certified Angus Beef (CAB) director of communications, and included Danette Amstein, Midan Marketing; Abram Babcock, Adams Land and Cattle; Jonathan Perry, Deer Valley Farms and chairman of the CAB Board of Directors; and Jessica Willingham, Sysco Foods.

"It's our job as producers to make certain that we keep that

one key thing we have always had — consumer confidence," Perry said. "We cannot afford to lose that."

When it comes to maintaining that confidence, marketing is everything, Amstein said, stressing the importance of providing relatable and easily understood information.

"I would caution us on the production side. We like to use big words to





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describe what we do,” Amstein said. “As consumers have gotten further and further away from the farm and from understanding where their food comes from, that’s why we need the *Certified Angus Beef*® brand. That’s why we need others in marketing to help be the conduit, the translator if you will, to the consumer.”

Translations

The panel highlighted how farmers and ranchers have been prioritizing sustainability for a long time and now have the opportunity to share that commitment

Amstein said although sustainability might make beef producers think of things like preserving water quality and

“We boil sustainability down to ... continuous improvement. It’s all about every day, how do we wake up and get better?”

Abram Babcock

Assurance (BQA) help consumers feel comfortable about the beef on their dinner table.

“We (cattlemen) know we’re taking care of the animal for all the right reasons,” Amstein said. “But for the consumer, they want to make sure the mama cow is cared for and the calf is cared for.”

Willingham said it’s through collaboration



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A consumer-perspectives panel addressed the third general session of the 2022 Angus Convention Nov. 6. Pictured are (from left) Nicole Erceg, Danette Amstein, Abram Babcock, Jonathan Perry and Jessica Willingham.

with consumers. Panelists with experience raising cattle — Perry and Babcock — agreed that if ranchers aren’t sustainable, they aren’t profitable.

“We boil sustainability down to, it’s all about continuous improvement,” Babcock said. “It’s all about every day, how do we wake up and get better?”

across the industry, from cattlemen to those in marketing and sales, that consumers will feel reassured. With combined efforts focused on transparency and openly sharing production practices, trust can flourish.

“I think sometimes it’s intimidating, and sometimes you worry what other people are going to think,” Willingham said. “I think we’ve just got to partner up. We can’t do it alone, and we’ve all got to tell the story.”

The panel agreed those in production agriculture have a great story to tell, but they might not know what to say or how to say it. They encouraged cattlemen to take small steps toward being rewarded for things they’re already doing. Opportunities like getting BQA-certified or capturing metrics to illustrate efficiency and progress all describe the hard work already being done.

“From generation to generation, we’ve proven we can make the land produce more, we can make cattle produce more,” Perry said. “We spend our time and our efforts producing it, raising it, making it great and our last thought is communication and marketing. That happens to a lot of us. We’ve got to get out and tell our story.”

The Angus Convention was hosted Nov. 4-7 in Salt Lake City, Utah. For news about Angus Convention, visit www.angus.org. **ABB**

Editor’s note: Peyton Schmitt is a communications specialist for the American Angus Association.