

NEW LEADERSHIP

Cobb to lead CAB production team; leadership team reorganized.

by Miranda Reiman & Crystal Meier, Certified Angus Beef LLC

Describing beef supply and demand as a bit of a chess match, Bruce Cobb says he's learned the game through various roles in the past three decades. Starting March 1, the Texas native will take on a new vantage point as executive vice president of production for Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB).

"I've been able to participate on both sides of the industry, demand development and then supply, and I enjoy figuring out: How can we satisfy the consumer and the end user by what we're doing on the production side?" he says. "Blending those two pieces is where the good stuff is."

Since 2005, Cobb has been at the helm of Consolidated Beef Producers, the country's largest cattle marketing cooperative. He and his team traded 700,000 head of cattle annually across the West and Midwest.

"It's clear we're on the right track as it relates to quality. You can look at how consumers have responded just in the last four to five years and how the brand has grown," Cobb says. "The challenge will be how do we get at those intangibles? These producers care for the animals. They care for the environment and the land. They want to do what's right."

But the "opportunity is still there" to communicate and capture the value in those facts, he says.

That's just one of the challenges Cobb looks forward to in his new role. As executive vice president, he will oversee the brand's supply development, producer communications and packing divisions, while serving as the voice of the producer to the greater company.

Premiums for the brand are built at the packing level, so cattlemen

will also benefit from Cobb's ability to help packers further identify sales opportunities.

"It was important to us that we found somebody so grounded in the production side that they had



Beginning March 1, Texas native Bruce Cobb will begin as executive vice president of production for Certified Angus Beef LLC.

credibility with the cattlemen we serve, but also that they were able to see beyond the ranch gate to the way the whole beef community is interconnected," CAB President John Stika says.

Cobb brings diverse perspectives, with experience ranging from the San Antonio Livestock Show and Rodeo to Daymon Worldwide to the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) and Texas Beef Council.

"He's spent time thinking like a retailer, international trader, cattle producer and consumer," Stika says.

The son of West Texas cotton

farmers, agriculture and FFA shaped Cobb early on. He spent just one semester as a landscape architecture major, before trading that for ag communications, earning his undergrad at Texas Tech University. His master's degree in international ag marketing at Texas A&M followed.

"It really comes down to the desire to continue to make a difference in the world of producers, whether that's cow-calf, feeders or stockers," Cobb says. "This is an opportunity to take that to the next level and really impact the well-being of producers from the production but also the demand side."

Cobb and wife Margie have three children, and have spent their fair share of time driving to events and cheering them on from the bleachers. They've been very active in their local Canyon, Texas, community and the greater ag community.

"The heritage and legacy and the value of being a good steward, integrity and honesty — those are things I want to continue to celebrate and enhance along the way, because there's just no other industry like agriculture," he says.

Cobb began his new role March 1 and can be reached at bcobb@certifiedangusbeef.com.

Leadership evolution

The CAB® brand was born of innovation — a spirit that's spurred four decades of bringing families together from gate to plate. To continue supporting this thriving community and network of premium beef partners, the brand recently evolved its leadership team, recognizing several retirements, promotions and new team members.

"We've had a long track record of strong leaders, and that's true as we look to those who have stepped up to guide our next 40 years," says Stika. "It takes a dedicated and creative group of people to move this brand forward, and I'm excited to leverage the experience and skill set of this team to position our partners from gate to plate for ongoing success."

This past summer, Mark McCully transitioned from vice president of production after 19 years with the brand to CEO of the American Angus Association. David MacVane, with 16 years on staff leading meat-cutting and retail merchandising, retired as executive vice president of retail in December. Mark Polzer, who helped distributors and chefs offer the branded beef for 22 years, retired as executive vice president of foodservice in February.

"While it can be challenging to replace great people, these innovators made significant contributions to the brand and motivated our staff to build relationships with partners," Stika adds. "I am truly excited about the expertise and dedication of the people leading those endeavors."

Executive team

Thirty-three-year veteran Brent Eichar, senior executive vice president of operations and finance, and Tracey Erickson, executive vice president of marketing, with 28 years, continue to anchor the executive team.

Adding perspective is Steve Ringle, executive vice president of business analysis, who has nearly 20 years with the brand in customer service and business development; and Pam Cottrell,

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senior vice president of people and culture, who for nearly 20 years has focused on nurturing the brand's high-performing and diverse team of employees. Bruce Cobb, executive vice president of production, is joining the team after 14 years as general manager of Consolidated Beef Producers.

Executive team



John Stika,
president



Brent Eichar,
senior executive vice president, operations and finance



Tracey Erickson,
executive vice president, marketing



Steve Ringle,
executive vice president, business analysis



Pam Cottrell,
senior vice president, people and culture



Bruce Cobb,
executive vice president, production

Business development

In the area of business development, newly appointed vice presidents will focus in three areas, supporting sales growth through strategic planning, delivering customer solutions and developing new opportunities. Sara Scott, with more than 10 years of experience in distributor and restaurant strategy, training and marketing, has been promoted to vice president of foodservice. David O'Diam, now vice president

of retail, also brings more than 10 years of meat science, merchandising and training solutions to retailers nationwide. Additionally, Cody Jones builds on his foodservice sales experience and passion for the global marketplace in his new role as vice president of international.

Marketing

In marketing, vice presidents in four core areas will guide engagement with brand fans and

partners around the world through individualized experiences and conversations from gate to plate. Deanna Walenciak has spent 20 years elevating the brand's marketing and education, and was recently named vice president of domestic brand marketing. Also with more than two decades of experience, Christy Johnson is vice president of branding, leading advertising, research and brand loyalty. Melissa Brewer, who has led communication, public

relations and consumer engagement for more than 10 years, is now vice president of communications. Gebran Charbine, who came with experience in Middle Eastern beef and most recently served the brand's customers in 50 countries, is vice president of international and ethnic brand marketing. █

Editor's note: Miranda Reiman is director of producer communications for Certified Angus Beef LLC. Crystal Meier is senior corporate communications manager.