

# NEWS & NOTES

## Industry tidbits from around the country

Compiled by Shauna Hermel, editor

### ▶▶▶ Walmart announces equity investment in Sustainable Beef LLC

Walmart and Sustainable Beef LLC announced Aug. 31 Walmart's signing of an agreement to acquire a minority stake in Sustainable Beef

LLC, a rancher-owned company based in North Platte, Neb. Walmart's equity investment is part of a broader strategic partnership to source top-quality Angus beef from Sustainable Beef LLC's new beef-processing facility.

According to the news release announcing the agreement, the partnership helps supplement the current beef industry and provides additional opportunities for ranchers to increase their business. As part of the investment, Walmart will have representation on Sustainable Beef's board.

Walmart's investment will help Sustainable Beef LLC open its beef-processing facility in North Platte, Neb. The facility is expected to break ground this fall and open by late 2024, creating more than 800 new jobs and increasing capacity for the beef industry.

"At Walmart, we are dedicated to providing high-quality, affordable beef to our customers, and an investment in Sustainable Beef LLC will give us even more access to these products," said Tyler Lehr, senior vice president of merchandising for deli services, meat and seafood, Walmart U.S. "We know Sustainable Beef LLC has a responsible approach to beef processing, one that includes creating long-term growth for cattle ranchers and family farmers. This investment provides greater visibility into the beef supply chain and complements Walmart's regeneration commitment to improve grazing management."

Sustainable Beef LLC will work with cattle feeders and ranchers to understand critical elements of the supply chain cycle, such as grain-sourcing and grazing management. Animal care will follow the Five Freedoms, and there will be a consistent approach to antibiotic use and reporting across herds in line with Walmart's Position on Antibiotics in Animals (<https://corporate.walmart.com/esgreport/esg-issues/animal-welfare>), which asks suppliers to adopt and implement American Veterinary

Medical Association Judicious Use Principles of Antimicrobials.

"We set out on a journey two years ago to create a new beef-processing plant to add some capacity to the industry and provide an opportunity for producers to integrate their business of raising quality cattle with the beef-processing portion of the industry and do it in a sustainable manner," said David Briggs, CEO of Sustainable Beef LLC. "During this journey we found that Sustainable Beef and Walmart aligned on continuing to improve how we care for our animals and crops and provide consumers the positive experience of enjoying quality beef."

### ▶▶▶ Court grants ag coalition intervention in gray wolf lawsuit

Aug. 24, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) and Public Lands Council (PLC) and other agriculture coalition members commended a decision from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit that will allow the coalition to intervene in the case *Defenders of Wildlife v. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service* and defend the previous administration's delisting of the gray wolf.

"Livestock producers are directly impacted by the species management decisions made by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, especially when it comes to species with significant federal footprints. The decision to allow the coalition to intervene in this case demonstrates what we have known all along: livestock producers deserve to have their voice heard on delisting the gray wolf," said Kaitlynn Glover, executive director of PLC and NCBA Natural Resources. "We look forward to engaging in this

Continued on page 140

### ▶▶▶ Association names new regional manager

The American Angus Association welcomes Quanah Gardiner of Ashland, Kan., as regional manager for the Northwest — Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. A fifth-generation Angus breeder, Gardiner brings a wealth of industry knowledge and experience to the position.

"I am eager to learn how to best assist Angus producers in the Western U.S. and help them achieve their goals," says Gardiner. "Beef production in the West may slightly differ from the production environment in the Midwest; however, the goal across all production sectors is the same — producing the very best Angus beef in a sustainable environment."

Gardiner will work with breeders in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Hawaii to promote Angus cattle, improve management practices, inform producers about Association programs and services, and help locate Angus seedstock. He can also advise producers on marketing opportunities available through the Association, including advertising in the *Angus Journal*<sup>®</sup>, the *Angus Beef Bulletin*, electronic extensions of the publications, and other avenues.

"The regional manager position combines three things I enjoy most," says Gardiner, "working with cattle, working with people and, most importantly, the opportunity to serve others."

David Gazda, Association director of field services, says he's thrilled to have Gardiner as a part of the regional manager team.

"Quanah has a unique combination of seedstock experience and the ability to connect with commercial cattlemen that makes him a great fit," he says.

Gardiner graduated from the University of Kansas with a bachelor's degree in secondary education. After completing a year as a rural high school teacher and athletics coach, he says, he wanted to return to his passion of the cattle industry.

Gardiner's experience began on his family's seedstock operation, Gardiner Angus Ranch. Growing up, he participated in several National Junior Angus Shows and learned firsthand the responsibilities and value of the regional manager position.

— by Briley Richard, *Angus Communications*



Quanah Gardiner

case to defend the delisting of a species that has so clearly recovered.”

“AFBF appreciates the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals for recognizing agriculture’s interest in defending the delisting of the gray wolf. Farmers and ranchers share the goal of a healthy and thriving ecosystem, and when the gray wolf exceeded recovery goals, it became an *Endangered Species Act* success story,” said American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) President Zippy Duvall. “With populations now thriving, management of the species should be the responsibility of the states, which can more effectively determine the most appropriate actions to manage gray wolf populations.”

In the decision the Court of Appeals wrote, “the district court abused its discretion by denying permissive intervention.”

With intervention granted, NCBA, PLC, AFBF and other ag interests will now be full participants in the case defending the gray wolf delisting.

To view the full decision, visit <https://bit.ly/ABBGrayWolf>.

### ►►► Building better markets through investments, technical assistance

USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) on Aug. 31 announced an additional \$21.9 million of funding is being awarded to 111 grant projects through the Meat and Poultry Inspection Readiness Grant Program (MPIRG), bringing total funding to \$54.6 million. This year’s awards will fund projects in 37 states. The funding will help strengthen and develop new market opportunities for meat and poultry processors throughout the United States.

To further these efforts, AMS is also encouraging MPIRG awardees and eligible participants in USDA’s Meat and Poultry Supply Chain initiatives to request assistance through the Meat and Poultry Processing Capacity Technical Assistance Program (MPPTA). Launched in March 2022, MPPTA connects participants to a nationwide network of resources and expertise.

“The Meat and Poultry Inspection Readiness Grants will help meat and poultry processors make necessary facility improvements, expand their

businesses, and strengthen the nation’s food supply chain,” said Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. “These grants are one part of USDA’s Meat and Poultry Supply Chain initiatives and will contribute to our efforts to transform our food system.”

Examples of projects funded this round include:

- Homegrown LG OK, a small processing plant in Locust Grove, Okla., will use MPIRG funding to modernize, expand, and comply with Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) protocols. The funding will allow the plant to purchase new machines to increase weekly production in a rural and low-access area.
- The Fork Food Lab, a shared-use kitchen incubator in Portland, Maine, will utilize MPIRG funding to expand into a 42,000-square-foot facility that meets the requirements for a Federal Grant of Inspection (GOI). The project is helping Fork Food Lab procure specialized equipment, assist five processors obtain Federal GOIs for wholesale distribution, support startup operations, and

provide ongoing training and technical assistance to processors positioned for wholesale.

- The Wall Meat Processing plant in Wall, S.D., has been awarded MPIRG funding to purchase equipment to improve humane handling and enhance food safety measures and efficiencies. The project will help the plant seamlessly deliver service operations in protein manufacturing to their producers and customers under the Cooperative Interstate Shipping program (CIS). Participating in the CIS program will open the plant to larger markets and add another resource to the food supply chain.

Facility improvements and expansions funded through MPIRG will help processors obtain a Federal Grant of Inspection or qualify for a state’s Cooperative Interstate Shipment program. Achieving a Federal Grant of Inspection or operating under a Cooperative Interstate Shipment program allows meat and poultry processors to ship products across state lines, develop new markets, increase capacity, and

### ►►► Coleman Angus to donate female headlining 2023 Angus Foundation Heifer Package

Coleman Angus of Charlo, Mont., will donate the heifer headlining the 2023 Angus Foundation Heifer Package. Coleman Chloe 173 (registration No. 20076459) is the Coleman Chloe female with the highest maternal weaned calf value (\$M) in the ranch’s herd. She is backed by a pedigree represented by the operation’s most notable cow families.

The heifer will be offered in January at the 2023 Cattlemen’s Congress in Oklahoma City, Okla., to support the Angus Foundation’s mission of furthering Angus education, youth and research efforts.

“We are honored to donate the female for the 2023 [Angus] Foundation Heifer Package,” says Larry Coleman, owner of Coleman Angus. “To be able to give back — because we’ve been so fortunate — is exciting.”

Coleman Angus is a family operation that takes pride in placing emphasis on the power of the Angus cow. Through meticulous selection for maternal traits, they have grown a loyal base of customers who value their herd’s genetics. The ranch hosts an annual bull sale each February, offering 175-200 bulls, and a female sale each October.

“We are thrilled Coleman Angus has offered this female from the iconic Chloe cow family,” says Jaclyn Upperman, Angus Foundation executive director. “The Coleman family recognizes the importance of

the Angus Foundation’s mission as we work to ensure a bright future for the breed.”

The sale of the Angus Foundation Heifer Package will take place Friday, Jan. 6, 2023, prior to the start of the 84th National Angus Bull Sale during Cattlemen’s

Congress. The sale will start at 2 p.m. at the Oklahoma State Fairgrounds, Oklahoma City, Okla. For more information about the 2023 Angus Foundation Heifer Package, contact Upperman at [jupperman@angus.org](mailto:jupperman@angus.org) or visit [www.angusfoundation.org](http://www.angusfoundation.org).

— by Peyton Schmitt, Angus Communications



The heifer headlining the 2023 Angus Foundation Heifer Package will be donated by Coleman Angus of Charlo, Mont. The offering will sell Friday, Jan. 6, 2023, prior to the start of the 84th National Angus Bull Sale during Cattlemen’s Congress in Oklahoma City, Okla. Pictured are (from left) Larry Coleman, Dee Coleman, Erica Coleman, Jenny Haag and Jeremy Haag.

better meet consumer and producer demand along the supply chain.

MPIRG recipients and other eligible participants, especially small and underserved stakeholders, in USDA's Meat and Poultry Supply Chain initiatives are encouraged to take advantage of the broad technical assistance offered through MPPTA. AMS has cooperative agreements with six organizations to form the MPPTA network, which has already provided valuable assistance to more than 300 businesses and organizations across the United States and its territories since its launch earlier this year.

For more information about MPPTA and the organizations involved, and to initiate a request for assistance, visit <https://bit.ly/abbMPPTA>. To view the list of this year's MPIRG awardees, visit <https://bit.ly/MPIRG Awards>. Additional information on MPIRG can be found at <https://bit.ly/abbMPIRG>.

### ▶▶▶ Cattle Contracts Library

The *Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022* directed the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to create a Cattle Contracts Library Pilot Program to increase

market transparency for cattle producers. USDA developed a working library model primarily populated with inactive contracts. It was presented to a wide range of stakeholders and end users, with a focus on content and usage.

To populate the pilot model with information from active contracts, AMS is drafting a rule that will result in publication of a regulation to ensure complete reporting of contractual information and volumes purchased against the contracts using the criteria established and the Livestock Mandatory Reporting statute.

"The Cattle Contracts Library is designed to be a tool for cattle producers, making information accessible, which may in turn allow them to capture unrealized value for their livestock," says Ethan Lane, NCBA vice president of government affairs. "We are pleased to see the pilot program progressing and note the important decision to use the Livestock Mandatory Reporting statutes as a basis for any subsequent rulemakings." |

Editor's note: For additional industry news, subscribe to the *Angus Beef Bulletin EXTRA* at <https://bit.ly/EXTRASub>.

### ▶▶▶ CAB names progressive partner, ambassador, seedstock winners

In addition to the feedyard and commercial cow-calf Commitment to Excellence and the Sustainability Award, Certified Angus Beef (CAB) named winners of its Progressive Partner, Ambassador and Seedstock Commitment to Excellence awards Sept. 22 during the brand's Annual Conference in Phoenix, Ariz.

**PROGRESSIVE PARTNER:** Working toward a better beef business for themselves and the industry earned Blythe Family Farms of White City, Kan., CAB's 2022 Progressive Partner Award.

For many, the word "progress" is one that often feels intangible, hard to grasp or clearly define.

"Progress" means that we are measuring improvement, coming up with a benchmark and knowing where we are today and where we want to go," says Debbie Lyons-Blythe. "Not always making change, but always moving forward."

Adapting Angus cattle to perform better in tandem with the land and create a better end product is a labor of love 33 years in the making for the Blythe family. Every year they've improved — one breeding decision, management change, farm tour and conversation at a time.

**AMBASSADOR:** Their spirit of hospitality and work to share how they raise high-quality beef earned the Walter family of Walter Angus Ranch, Hudson, Colo., CAB's 2022 Ambassador Award.

Teaching an appreciation for Angus cattle comes naturally to Terry and Becky Walter. Along with their children Trevor, Ty and Katelyn, they've built Walter Angus into a fifth-generation seedstock ranch that specializes in high quality at a high elevation.



Succession plans are a frequent dinner conversation for the Blythes. From grazing plans to who's on calving duty, all topics have table time.



From left, Ty, Terry and Trevor Walter look forward to hosting tours with people across the supply chain.

Many of the groups that visit Walter Angus include foodservice sales staff who merchandise CAB or chefs serving the brand at their restaurant. They've also hosted food bloggers, media, video and photo crews to capture their story to share in CAB training and promotional materials.

"I enjoy talking to people, especially as society gets more disconnected from agriculture," Terry says. "I want people to know that ranching isn't easy; it takes a lot of work producing high-quality cattle so people can feel good about eating beef."

**SEEDSTOCK:** Their determined journey toward elusive perfection helped the Larsons of Larson Angus Ranch earn CAB's 2022 Seedstock Commitment to Excellence Award.

Economics and a passion stirred from years of studying genetics and the *Angus Journal* brought Dan Larson and his wife, Becky, back to Sharon Springs, Kan., to build the best Angus herd they could. Now they manage 800 cows. Since 2007, that's been with the help of their son Brady along with his wife, Kyla.

Cow work, genetic improvements and breeding plans are discussed for hours, because building the perfect cow takes continual adjustments.

"It's one of those things that you just constantly build on," Brady says. "You're never gonna get the perfect animal, but you just keep building on it and build on it and build on it."

Spanning rough, rocky terrain along Ladder Creek, the ranch fills a niche next to farm country.

"We're turning grass pastures that can't be farmed into a high-quality protein source," Dan says. "We can count on our Angus cows in this region. They work hard for us for 10 or 12 years and produce calves that have a lot of vigor."



The Larsons — from left, Becky, Dan, Brady and Kyla — have the same priorities as their customers: raise cattle that can do it all.