

AngusSource® now a viable CAB source

Cattle genetically verified through the AngusSource® program have been eligible for the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB) brand since June. Soon producers might start seeing premiums for those Angus-based fed cattle.

National Beef Packing Co. LLC reported it has filed paperwork with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to allow AngusSource cattle to be considered for its premium Angus programs. National will be the first packer

to use this additional means to identify “Angus-type” cattle, historically defined by the phenotypic, 51% black-hided criteria.

Art Wagner, vice president of procurement, said he expects the system to be operational shortly.

“We’re working through all of the fine details,” he said. “We are currently working with USDA to get preliminary approval and schedule plant audits.”

For more than a year, AngusSource has led in the Angus genetic-, age- and source-verified arena. The USDA Process Verified Program (PVP) requires a minimum of 50% Angus parentage — calves must be sired by a registered Angus bull. Cattle are enrolled at the ranch of origin and documented by month, day and year of birth for the firstborn calf in the group.

Upon final USDA approval, Wagner expects National to begin accepting AngusSource cattle into CAB first at its Liberal, Kan., and then at its Dodge City, Kan., plant. The packer will limit harvest to specific dates, yet to be determined, and only load lots will be evaluated for the brand.

“We need to learn to walk before we run,” said Wagner, who predicts a fairly seamless flow of information. “With age-verified and all-natural cattle, we have experience in handling this type of information. We just have to make sure the communication goes all the way through.”

He explained that a buyer will visually confirm a set of cattle as AngusSource, and then give the producer instructions for the needed paperwork on delivery.

“A lot of them are already familiar with participating in other programs as well,” Wagner added. “Those cattle, based on whatever information accompanies them via AngusSource, might be eligible for a variety of value-added premiums.”

Mark McCully, director of supply development for Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB), said implementation of the program presents new opportunities.

“This will obviously affect the producers who are using registered Angus bulls on a set of cows that might not produce black calves,” he said, citing a smoky Charolais-Angus cross. “Now that we know the genetics, those cattle that were previously not eligible will be evaluated for CAB and its premiums.”

McCully said the long-term effects will be much greater than the initial numbers.

“Short term, supply will be fairly limited because the AngusSource program is in its infancy stage,” he said. “We appreciate the leadership step that National is taking by putting this in place, even though there is not a tremendous number of these cattle out there today. They know that this will stimulate demand.”

Sara Moyer, director of AngusSource, said the PVP has enrolled more than 68,000 cattle since it began in October 2005. More than 13 million cattle were evaluated for the CAB brand in 2006.

For more information on CAB products and programs, visit www.cabpartners.com.