

Angus Producers Attend 2013 BLI

Event participants traveled throughout the Midwest to explore the beef industry.

Angus breeders from across the United States and Canada gained knowledge and enhanced their leadership skills during the sixth-annual Beef Leaders Institute (BLI), hosted June 17-20 by the American Angus Association.

While on the four-day institute, 20 young cattle producers toured packing plants, feedlots and other industry segments. The learning opportunity is designed to give applicants, ages 25-45, a chance to meet with Association staff and industry representatives while networking with their peers in the Angus industry.

“BLI is a great opportunity for Angus producers who are wanting to enhance their leadership skills, learn more about the beef industry and meet new people,” says Bryce Schumann, Association CEO. “We enjoyed hosting them on this premier educational experience.”

The BLI tour began at the Association headquarters in Saint Joseph, Mo. Following presentations from Angus Genetics Inc., Angus Productions Inc., Certified Angus Beef LLC and the Angus Foundation, the group traveled to Iowa and Nebraska for several in-depth tours. Their stops included a Tyson beef-processing plant, Whole Foods grocery store, food distributor Sysco, the GeneSeek genetics lab and a Cargill Meat Solutions deli meat processing plant.

Rhonda Wulf of Morris, Minn., says programs such as BLI are great ways to build connections in the beef industry.

“BLI helps people see the industry from a broader level, get out of their comfort zone, meet new people, and bring back new energy when they return to work,” Wulf says. “This opportunity really helped me recalibrate my focus on the beef industry and look at it from a more holistic manner.”

Participant Andrew Stewart, Greensburg, Ind., says this experience



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION

Representing 11 states in attending the 2013 Beef Leaders Institute in Saint Joseph, Mo., are (front row, from left) Cody Bright, Gaffney, S.C.; Sarah Fuller, Twin Falls, Idaho; Judd Hoos, Rushville, Neb.; Damon New, Leavenworth, Kan.; Rhonda Wulf, Morris, Minn.; (second row, from left) Greg Meier, Jackson, Mo.; Nick Jindra, Clarkson, Neb.; Chad Rotenberger, Ludlow, S.D.; Josh Malson, Parma, Idaho; Mathew Bolduc, Claresholm, Alta., Canada; (third row, from left) Andrew Stewart, Greensburg, Ind.; Clayton Glause, Fremont, Neb.; Danny Poss, Scotia, Neb.; Chris Fryzek, Madrid, Neb.; Aaron Strommen, Taylor, N.D.; (back row, from left) Daniel Wells, Chillicothe, Ohio; Andrew Howell, Milltown, Ind.; Justin Diefenbach, Mineral Point, Wis.; Cody Quam, Lodi, Wis.; and Casey Maher, Morristown, S.D.

was exciting to him because of the new relationships he built with classmates.

“One thing I wanted to do is just learn more about the whole process and what the industry is trying to focus on or what the consumer wants,” Stewart says. “That’s what we’re all really here for is to try and make a product that is desirable for the consumer and one that’s hopefully profitable for all of our ranchers, packers and feedlots as well.”

Participants in this year’s BLI class

were Mathew Bolduc, Claresholm, Alta., Canada; Sarah Fuller, Twin Falls, Idaho; Josh Malson, Parma, Idaho; Andy Howell, Milltown, Ind.; Andrew Stewart, Greensburg, Ind.; Damon New, Leavenworth, Kan.; Rhonda Wulf, Morris, Minn.; Greg Meier, Jackson, Mo.; Chris Fryzek, Madrid, Neb.; Clayton Glause, Fremont, Neb.; Judd Hoos, Rushville, Neb.; Nick Jindra, Clarkson, Neb.; Danny Poss, Scotia, Neb.; Aaron Strommen, Fort Rice, N.D.; Dan Wells, Chillicothe, Ohio;

Cody Bright, Gaffney, S.C.; Casey Maher, Morristown, S.D.; Chad Rotenberger, Ludlow, S.D.; Justin Diefenbach, Mineral Point, Wis.; and Cody Quam, Lodi, Wis.

For more information about the Association or the BLI, visit www.angus.org or call 816-383-5100.



Editor’s Note: Article provided by the American Angus Association. The August Angus Journal features an 11-page overview of the BLI tour.



PHOTOS BY LYNSEY MEHARG

BLI participants and regional manager Matt Caldwell discuss the operations of Tri-Tower Farms with owner Cale Jones near the working facilities used for both the feedlot and cow-calf operations.



Trans Ova Genetics is a premier reproductive-technologies center focused on providing industry-leading technologies and expertise to cattle breeders. Offering a limited amount of gender-sorted semen, using the machine shown here, Trans Ova strives to be a full-service reproductive center for its customers.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TYSON FOODS

Processing roughly 4,800 head per day, the Tyson–Dakota City facility, which employs 4,400 people, is a finely tuned machine and was a valuable chance for the members of BLI to see a side of the beef industry that most never see.



BLI participants were able to see all aspects of a feedlot at Gregory Feedlot. “We run a hotel and restaurant,” Manager David Trowbridge said. “We’ve got to keep the rooms full and the feed going out.”



This year, GeneSeek is on track to test 1 million samples, including nearly any species, though cattle, swine and canines make up the majority of their samples. Each sample, upon entering the lab, is entered into the computer and barcoded so that it can be tracked from that point on within the lab.



Serving a five-state area locally and an additional 13 states nationally, Sysco Lincoln Inc. offered the unique opportunity for producers to see how their product moves from the packer to the distributor to the consumer.