



Silver in the Bank

Longtime CAB partner McPherson County Feeders reaches landmark 30.06 level.

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Good cattle can keep getting better. It only takes a little communication, focus and cooperation working toward that common goal. Allan Sents has seen it happen. In fact, he sees that potential to improve as the silver lining in every closeout.

The owner-manager of McPherson County Feeders, near Marquette, Kan.,

works with his devoted staff to set high goals for the cattle they feed. If there's much Angus influence, as there is in more and more pens these days, they aim for the *Certified Angus Beef*[®] (CAB[®]) brand target.

Nearly 11 years ago, Sents decided to become a Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB)-licensed partner with an eye toward attracting more Angus cattle and earning more premiums for customers. He did that by developing close working relationships with those customers, sharing information and helping them

PHOTO BY LAURA NELSON

Left: McPherson County Feeders attained 30.06 Silver Level last fall. That means Allan Sents and crew have fed more than 1,000 head of 30.06-designated cattle, cumulative, since licensing.

improve genetics and management.

The results began to show up in the ranks of the CAB Thirty-Aught-Six (30.06) Program listings published each month in the *Angus Journal*. Those harvest groups must have at least 30% CAB brand acceptance or grade USDA Prime, with no more than 3% Yield Grade (YG) 4 or 5, and 3% of carcasses weighing more than 1,000 pounds (lb.).

McPherson County Feeders attained 30.06 Silver Level last fall. That means Sents and crew have fed more than 1,000 head of 30.06-designated cattle, cumulative, since licensing. They reached the Bronze level of 500 head in May 2005.

Of the 922 CAB-eligible cattle in those on-target groups, 36.6% were accepted for the CAB brand and 4.3% graded USDA Prime, mostly CAB brand Prime.

“One of the biggest strengths of McPherson County Feeders is their competitiveness,” says Gary Fike, beef cattle specialist with CAB. “Allan is great about working hard to sort and market the cattle to their potential and then provide data to his customers so they can improve.”

That’s just another of several strategies Sents uses to help limit their risk. “We pass that information along about the value of higher-quality cattle and emphasize sorting at the feedyard to hit particular grids,” he says.

Advantages of size

Focus and cooperation between the feedlot and producers are keys to improving the aim and one day hitting the Gold Level of 2,000 cattle in 30.06. At 10,000 head, McPherson County Feeders is no giant among Kansas feedlots, but there are other advantages.

“We are a small enough yard to focus on taking care of the cattle from the time they arrive,” Sents says. “We can maintain that attention throughout the feeding period.”

Fike adds, “Allan and his staff do a great job getting new customers to feel at ease feeding for the first time.”

It’s a new world for cow-calf customers. When a Montana customer wanted a preview on what to expect, Sents used ultrasound scans to help identify which cattle could reach CAB acceptance, in time to provide breeding advice for the next calf crop. After all, success can only come from the quality of cattle fed.

“We look at the genetics, as well as the health and weaning programs that calves come from, to prevent health issues further down the road,” Sents says. Better genetics have made the cattle easier to sell, therefore bringing a higher price and increasing profitability.

The Montana customer shifted to more Angus influence during the last six years. “He’s taking in the carcass and feedlot information in terms of selecting Angus bulls, and that’s making noticeable changes in his herd,” the cattle feeder says.

CAB recognition — the yard was Small Feedlot Partner of the Year in 2005 and office manager Dara Dix was CAB Quality Assurance Officer of the Year in 2009 — has helped bring in better cattle, too. “Certified Angus Beef has helped drive our program in a positive way,” Sents says. The additional incentives to meet their requirements have encouraged our

producers to improve their live and carcass performance.”

In addition to feeding more Angus-type cattle, Sents is participating in implant trials with CAB. With preliminary results expected by summer, the study aims to find a balance between growth technologies and getting the most quality grade potential out of good cattle, Fike says.

Ranking fourth-highest among all CAB feedlots in 30.06 volume achieved, McPherson County Feeders has worked with the brand to capture data on more than 50,000 cattle for its customers since 1999, he adds.

