

Youth Leaders Orientation

Story by
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Along with snow and freezing temperatures, the first week of January brought the Angus breed's young leaders to Wooster, Ohio, for the annual Youth Leaders Orientation.

Valued as an opportunity to engage and educate the next generation of influential cattlemen, CAB staffers dedicated two days to ensuring the young people left with a better understanding of the brand that supports the cattle they raise.

"We know that a lot of what we do at CAB is out of sight, out of mind for these young Angus breeders," says Kara Lee, supply marketing coordinator for the brand.

It's a world that brings value to what they do at home, she says, but it's quite different from what they live in each day.

Most groups come into CAB's Education & Culinary Center (ECC) knowing much about the food industry, but little of the production story. The inverse is true for this group, Lee says: "That's their business, so cattle aren't the main focus for these two days."

Instead, the spotlight shines on foodservice and brand marketing to reveal how a high-quality steak may leave



Young Angus leaders (from left) Katelyn Corsentino, Tim Mardesen, Macy Perry, Braden Henricks, Alex Rogen and Gabrielle Lemenager learned about how foodservice and brand marketing affect their operations.

their ranch as a steer and end up on a consumer's plate.

Alex Rogen, Brandon, S.D., is a junior at South Dakota State University and

has Angus production in his genes. Time in the showing with steers and in the pasture with bulls led to this year as a pre-vet junior with plans to serve animals.

He's also the National Junior Angus Association's chairman of the board.

"The biggest takeaway was the affirmation that a quality product needs to be our key focus," Rogen says, "because without it, we don't have a job that's going to make us money. It was a good reminder, for me and others, that it's not just the cattle industry, but the beef industry."

Consumers have to want it and be willing to pay for it, Rogen says. Otherwise, beef may not be the protein of choice.

"To be able to go learn and share with people that there are specifications in place that can guarantee a consistent and reliable eating experience is honestly a privilege," Rogen says.

For those coming from a stock-show background, he added, "It's important to keep that terminal outlook on things. At the end of the day, the cows are pretty, but they have to work and do good things for the consumer."

Young Angus members interested in attending the 2017 Youth Leaders Conference Jan. 3-4 should look for applications this summer.



Editor's Note: *Laura Conaway is a producer communications specialist for Certified Angus Beef LLC.*