

Thorpe Honored for Beef Industry Achievements

by **NICOLE LANE**,
Certified Angus Beef LLC

There is no man more associated with the words “cattle market” than Topper Thorpe, who left his mark on the industry during a 32-year tenure with CattleFax. His contributions and leadership will be noted as Thorpe receives the Feeding Quality Forum Industry Achievement Award in August.

“The uniqueness of the cattle-feeding industry is that we supply almost 80% of the fed cattle produced in the world,” says Larry Corah, vice president of supply for Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB), who began his own career when Thorpe was a rising star. “That is a pretty impactful industry, and CattleFax and Topper have had a strong influence on how successful it has been.”

Raised on a diversified livestock and crop operation in southern New Mexico, Thorpe earned degrees in business and economics from New Mexico State University before becoming one of two original employees of CattleFax in 1968. As the first analyst at the start-up company, Thorpe laid the foundation and

served 30 years as CEO of what became “the nation’s premier market information, analysis, research and education service, owned by cattle producers and feeders.”

“His leadership in creating the organization of CattleFax and putting market power in producer hands helped the feeding industry grow and become what it is today,” Corah says.

“Topper understood the value of data, of information, and he could take that aggregate data and do the analysis and then weave a picture of what this industry looked like and what it was going to look like 5 to 10 years down the road,” says Randy Blach, current CattleFax CEO, hired by Thorpe in 1980.

Friends and customers always appreciated Thorpe’s candor in bringing transparency to all sectors of the cattle industry. He led CattleFax through the farm crisis of the 1980s, ensuring company analysts always told the honest truth, even

if it wasn’t what customers wanted to hear.

During his leadership, CattleFax evolved with technology that “accelerated the learning curve” for producers.

“I think really all the credit goes to Topper,” Blach says. “CattleFax wouldn’t be here today if it wasn’t for him. And it wasn’t always easy. There were a lot of lean years, but his wisdom and guidance got us through those years and developed a foundation that we still benefit from today.”

Beyond his talent with the market and business, Thorpe was known for the emphasis he put on relationships, multiplying himself through others who knew him as a great mentor.

“You always knew where he stood,” Blach says. “He showed he was genuinely interested in his people.”

The former CEO may have stepped down in 2001, but his vision sustains CattleFax and the cattle industry today.

“I just want to thank Topper personally



Topper Thorpe

Registration opens for Feeding Quality Forum

You listen to the markets on the radio, pick up a paper to read about the latest consumer scare or watch an employee hand in his two-week notice. What does it all mean for your operation?

Find answers at the 9th annual Feeding Quality Forum in Kearney, Neb., Aug. 19 or in Amarillo, Texas, Aug. 21.

Each year producers gather in August to hear from experts on the issues they face in their operations every day. The forum updates them on the news and research that go into feeding success.

“The cattle industry continues to operate in uncharted waters with regard to price, supplies and demand,” says Mark McCully, Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) vice president for production. “Staying on top of this ever-changing marketplace is crucial for feedlot operators.”

Space is limited but registration by Aug. 4 takes just \$50 to reserve a spot; that price increases to \$75 after the deadline.

“The Feeding Quality Forum has really evolved into one of the premier networking and educational events for the cattle feeder,” McCully says.

Strategically located and planned with a program packed full of expertise, McCully says he is sure this year’s event will give attendees “the upper hand” when it comes to market and management insight.

Sign-in begins at 9:30 a.m., followed by a quick welcome at 10 before informational sessions kick off with Dan Basse, AgResource Co. president. As requested by returning participants year after year, Basse will be discussing the

market outlook for protein “foodstuffs” and feedstuffs, both locally and globally.

Scott Brown, University of Missouri research economist, will speak on the impact of high-quality and high-grading cattle. After a lunch featuring the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand and the 2014 Industry Achievement Award presentation, afternoon sessions begin.

Those include a presentation covering consumer demand, consumer questions and the “Ground Beef Nation” by Brad Morgan, meat science and food safety specialist for Zoetis.

“The marketplace is coming more and more in line with consumer demands and their desire for high-quality beef,” says McCully. “Cattlemen that keenly understand these consumer trends are able to modify their management and marketing to be more profitable in the end.”

To conclude the seminar, participants will hear about how to get the most from testing their feed, and then engage in the feedlot-manager panel discussion on conquering the labor, hiring and retention battle.

The seminar, sponsored by Zoetis, Roto-Mix, Land O’ Lakes Purina Mills, *Feedlot* magazine and CAB, should adjourn at 4:15 p.m.

To register, visit www.feedingqualityforum.com, or contact Marilyn Conley by phone at 800-225-2333 or by email at mconley@certifiedangusbeef.com.

by **Kaitlin Morgan, Certified Angus Beef LLC**

Editor’s Note: Kaitlin Morgan is an industry information intern for Certified Angus Beef LLC.

for all he has done for me and all that he has done for CattleFax and the benefit he has brought to the cattle and beef industries through all these years,” says Blach.

To Thorpe, he was just doing his job.

“Receiving this award is very humbling because there are many others that have made great contributions in the industry. To be considered is an honor,” Thorpe says.

He will be recognized and comment at the 9th annual Feeding Quality Forums in Kearney, Neb., Aug. 19 and in Amarillo, Texas, Aug. 21 (see “Registration opens for Feeding Quality forum”).



Editor’s Note: Nicole Lane is an industry information intern for Certified Angus Beef LLC.

CAB STAFF CONTACTS

206 Riffel Rd., Wooster, OH 44691-8588;
phone: 330-345-2333; fax: 330-345-0808
www.cabpartners.com

John Stika, president
Brent Eichar, senior vice president
Tracey Erickson, vice president, marketing
Mark Polzer, vice president, business development
Larry Corah, vice president, supply development
Mark McCully, vice president, production

SUPPLY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Kansas staff:
CAB Program Satellite Office
1107 Hylton Heights Rd.,
Manhattan, KS 66502
785-539-0123; fax: 785-539-2883
Larry Corah, vice president
Gary Fike, beef cattle specialist
Wendy Nichols, office and data manager
Kara Lee, supply programs manager
30731 172nd St., Leavenworth, KS 66048
812-653-0020

Nebraska staff:
Paul Dykstra, beef cattle specialist
782 5th St., PO Box 856,
Chappell, NE 69129
308-874-2203

Miranda Reiman, assistant director, industry information
75845 Rd. 417, Cozad, NE 69130;
308-784-2294

Ohio staff:
Marilyn Conley, administrative assistant

INDUSTRY INFORMATION DIVISION

Steve Suther, director
16360 Victory Rd., Onaga, KS 66521
785-889-4162

Blogs:
Consumer-oriented: www.GoRare.com
Supply Development:
<http://blackinkwithCAB.com>



Twitter:
@BlackInkBasics
@CertAngusBeef



Find us on Facebook:
• BlackInkBasics
• CertifiedAngusBeef

To order CAB merchandise, visit <http://pos.certifiedangusbeef.com>. For a source for recipe ideas, storage and handling tips, restaurant listings, retail store locations and cooking information, visit www.certifiedangusbeef.com.