

CAB Bestows Annual Awards to Top Partners

At its 25th annual conference, Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) honored several producers and feedlots for their commitment to excellence in helping to produce product for the Certified Angus Beef® (CAB®) brand. The conference was Aug. 21-23 in Cleveland, Ohio.



By sorting to optimize beef quality, Terry (left) and Rick Beller maintain a nearly 21% *Certified Angus Beef®* acceptance rate across thousands of enrollments.

Feedlot Partner of the Year, <20,000 head

Beller Feedlots, Lindsay, Neb., is the 2003 CAB Feedlot Partner of the Year, under 20,000 head. "We want our partners to work with ranchers to maximize the value in Angus genetics," says Turk Stovall, assistant supply development director for CAB. "That's what Terry and Rick Beller do."

Unique among CAB feedlot award winners, Beller Feedlots has almost no retained ownership business. "We do a little partnering," Terry says, "but we own 90% of the cattle

we feed." However, they return information to any rancher who asks for it, regardless of ownership.

One-time capacity is less than 5,000 head, but they enrolled almost 7,000 head in the CAB feedlot program last year. Though relatively small, Beller Feedlots achieved the fifth-highest rank for volume of CAB-accepted cattle among all 80 licensees, Stovall says, with a CAB acceptance rate near 21%.

"We're always looking for the better Angus cattle because they show up at the end on our bottom line," Rick says. Their history of 100% ownership helps in recruiting more Angus ranch business.

"A lot of feedlots will partner at 50%," Terry notes. "We prefer to hold it to 10% to 20%, to keep our equity flowing, but we will go up to 50:50 if a rancher wants to."

Feedlot Partner of the Year, >20,000 head

Among the larger yards, there is a standard of excellence that only a precision-designed and guided masterpiece can achieve. "North Platte Feeders (NPF) is the Cadillac of Nebraska feedyards," Stovall says. Licensed since 2001, NPF of North Platte, Neb., is the 2003 CAB Feedlot Partner of the Year for lots with 20,000-plus capacity.

In 1989 manager Jack McCaffery planned and built the 43,000-head lot based on decades of experience, sweat and even a few mistakes.

Being big does not keep a feedlot from standing out for high-quality beef, any more than such a focus keeps it from operating in the cash cattle market. "We've always figured you have to feed high-quality cattle and be detailed in everything you do," McCaffery says. Whether customers feed 4,000 or 100 head, "we feel everybody is equal," he says.

The feedlot became known for quality, but McCaffery admits, "We hadn't been as intense with the data. Not until we became licensed with CAB." After all, carcass data doesn't come easy in the cash market.

"People connect the focus on beef quality with grid marketing," Stovall notes. "North Platte proves high beef quality standards can fit well with a focus on live trade and cash marketing."



The 43,000-head feedlot was built south of North Platte, Neb., in 1989. With the help of his son, Dean (right), Jack McCaffery planned it based on decades of experience, sweat and even a few mistakes.



"The more we know about the cattle, the better job we can do of optimizing animal performance and producing high-quality, safe beef," says Ken Schilz, manager, McGinley-Schilz Feedyard Ltd.

Progressive Partner

Feedlot manager Ken Schilz looks for opportunities to work more closely with suppliers and customers. At McGinley-Schilz Feedyard Ltd., a CAB-licensed partner near Brule, Neb., innovative management is building trust to create promising partnerships.

A key partnership has five ranchers from Wyoming, Montana and Minnesota joining the Schilz family as co-owners. That helps create a reliable supply of source- and process-verified cattle, Schilz says. All partners are trained in quality assurance (QA), and cattle come to the feedlot with a documented history.

The exchange of information goes both ways. Analyses of performance and carcass data are returned to ranchers in a timely fashion and in a form that is useful to genetic selection and fine-tuning of management.

For their use of innovative strategies to build the partnership with CAB, and an overall focus on quality beef production and marketing, McGinley-Schilz Feedyard was honored with the 2003 Progressive Partner Award.

"Ken brings a cutting-edge focus to the business that shows in his personal style," Stovall says. "He's always on a quest for information, whether it's carcass data or dinner conversation. It shows in his feedlot management. He is not just converting corn into pounds of beef, but making the most of each animal, as if putting puzzles together."

Seedstock Commitment to Excellence

West of Laramie, Wyo., ranchers learn from nature, or they don't stay long. Gary and Gloria Parker have been in the registered Angus business in this high and dry valley for 15 years.

Surviving would never be enough for the Parkers, however. They adapted so well as to thrive, and 700 Shamrock Angus Ranch cows supply genetics for the growing CAB brand.

The Parkers are devoted to improving the Angus breed and making them work for everyone, from high-country bull customers to consumers. That's why CAB named them 2003 Seedstock Commitment to Excellence Award winners.

Today, the ranch operates on 3,000 owned and 15,000 leased acres at an elevation of 7,500 feet (ft.). Shamrock has developed its specialty in selling hardy Angus stock tested for pulmonary arterial pressure (PAP), a critical health issue for herds operating above 5,000 ft. They have tested more than 3,500 bulls since the early 1990s.



Gary (right) and Gloria Parker have devoted themselves to improving the Angus breed and making their cattle work for everyone, from high-country bull customers to consumers. That's why Certified Angus Beef LLC named them the 2003 Seedstock Commitment to Excellence Award winners.

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Wayne Smith, manager of Hergert Feeding Co. (HFC), Mitchell, Neb., nominated his customer, Shamrock Ranch. Smith and HFC are runners up for 2003 CAB QA Officer and Feedlot Partner of the Year, respectively. Moreover, Smith won the top QA award from CAB last year, in part for helping

build a producer network with Shamrock Angus. HFC recently achieved Silver Level in the CAB Thirty-Aught (30-0) recognition program. Since licensing in 2000, HFC has marketed more than 1,000 on-target cattle with 30% CAB or Prime and no outliers.

Runner-up Feedlot Partner of the Year, >20,000 head

Irsik & Doll Feedyard (IDFY) is runner-up CAB Feedlot Partner of the Year for yards with 20,000 head or more capacity. The 28,000-head Garden City, Kan., yard, managed by Mark Sebranek, is part of the Irsik & Doll group of five CAB-licensed Kansas feedlots. IDFY sets no minimum herd size in dealing with

customers, and it has made a specialty of developing wheel-and-spoke alliances with Angus seedstock producers from Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. IDFY is also the third-place Top Volume Award winner this year, accounting for 1,350 CAB-accepted cattle and posting the highest CAB acceptance rate of the top five volume CAB partners, at 21.9%.

CAB Quality Assurance Officer of the Year

From horseback, Scott Stephens knows at a glance which cattle are ready and which ones need another week. His experience and talent have helped turn the 5,000-head Schmitz Feedlots LLC into one of the best-managed CAB licensees in the nation.



As manager and assistant manager, Roger Schmitz (right) and Scott Stephens are close collaborators. Each has his own specialization, and together they make a well-rounded team.

Stephens has an eye for quality cattle, and you can see it in his work at the Clayton, N.M., feedlot. Sorting cattle, he can “eyeball” carcass weights with the best of them, as well as the Choice and CAB rates.

That eye, along with excellent management techniques, earned Stephens the title of 2003 CAB QA Officer of the Year.

Stephens, a native Texan and former Marine, began his career working for larger feedlots, but was looking for an operation with more focus when he came to Schmitz in 1993. Four years later, he was named assistant manager. As award winner, he and a guest will travel to the National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas, Nev., later this year.



Editor's Note: This article was supplied by the CAB Supply Development Division. For more information about award winners — including those in retail, foodservice, packing, international and value-added products — visit the newsroom at www.certifiedangusbeef.com.