

# Quality Care Matters

A Column about Beef & Dairy Animal Care



## Smucker Family Grows Butcher Business by Adding Value for Customers

In this month's Quality Care Matters, we introduce Smucker's Meats, a third-generation custom processor in Mount Joy, Pa.

Established in 1965 by David Smucker, the business is run today by David's son Jay and Jay's two sons, Mike and Jason. While the business model has changed over the years, customer service and quality products still guide Smucker's Meats.

Until a fire forced relocation from Manheim to Mount Joy in 2003, Smucker's Meats included custom butchering for local farmers and a thriving retail business, selling meat and a full line of salads at the shop and local farmers' market stands.

With the purchase of an older plant in Mount Joy, Jay and his sons refocused on custom butchering for farmers, slowly renovating the plant to meet USDA inspection for processing in 2004, and fabrication in 2005.

The Smuckers can process about 50 head of cattle each week, in addition to 15-20 hogs and 10-15 bison. Thirty employees work at Smucker's Meats in slaughter, fabrication and processing.

Jay gives a simple explanation of the family's core business.

"We don't buy or sell; we are just the processor," he said. "We complete the work order and our customers take it from there."

A smokehouse allows customers to choose jerky and hot dog options, in addition to whole muscle cuts. About 50 percent of the business consists of grass-fed beef customers, although the business also caters to producers of heritage breed hogs.

In 2006, the Smuckers processed their first Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) cattle for Richard and Dave McElhaney, Hookstown, Pa.

Although they don't employ a grader at their plant, Mike said, "Our BQA cattle would grade better, because they're heavier, fatter cattle. BQA producers are strong cattle feeders, with consistent numbers."

Mike said they offer custom packaging to help farmers build brand recognition and that they "try



Surrounding Smucker's Meats owner Jay Smucker, seated, are from left, Mike Smucker, company founder David Smucker and Jason Smucker.

to keep our pricing structure simple for our customers."

Jay reiterated that their company goal "is to add value to what our customers bring to us." One way they add value for their BQA customers is including BQA labels on the package.

"We are always asking the Beef Council for more labels, every time I turn around," Mike said.

In addition to Pennsylvania, Smucker's Meats draws customers from a wide area in the Mid-Atlantic region, including Maryland, Delaware, the Finger Lakes of New York and Virginia. Business continues to grow with butchering scheduled about three months out.

"We confirm our schedule and then keep in contact with our customers," Mike said. "We also keep a cancel list, so we can fill people in whenever possible. We don't put people into a box."

Early adopters of the beef value cuts, such as the flat iron steak and shoulder tender, the Smuckers first showcased the new cuts in 2006. Today, they are "almost standard orders," Mike said. "Even our bison customers order them."

Reflecting on the company's incre-

mental growth each year, Jay noted that he and his sons always try to turn challenges into opportunities.

"If you have lemons, you need to make lemonade," he said.

"USDA regulations regarding humane handling is a huge challenge for us right now, but without USDA, our opportunity would be very, very limited," Jay said.

"What's key for us is that each of us brings strength to the business," he said. "I serve as general manager, Mike is food safety supervisor, and Jason is production manager. When we put our heads together, we can problem-solve."

The Smuckers are not intimidated by the larger processors in the market.

"I think there's a place for big agriculture and there's a place for us," Mike said. "They are feeding the world, and we are feeding a niche. There's a valid place for both of us. We enjoy the niche we have, but it's incorrect to say we are better."

To learn more about Smucker's Meats, visit its website at [www.smuckersmeats.com](http://www.smuckersmeats.com) or follow Mike Smucker on Twitter at the handle @tweef32.



Allen Lawyer, manager of Rally Farm, talks with the group before the farm tour.

## Beef Checkoff Hosts Registered Dietitians During Food, Farm and Science Event

BEDFORD, Pa. — The Beef Checkoff, through a partnership between the New York Beef Industry Council and the Northeast Beef Promotion Initiative, hosted 25 registered dietitians Oct. 20-21 in Hyde Park, N.Y.

The inaugural event focused on three aspects of the beef industry: food, farm and the science behind protein research.

Dietitians traveled from 10 states to attend, including New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Kentucky.

The dietitians kicked off the event by touring The Culinary Institute of America (CIA), to experience firsthand where many of the nation's top chefs began.

Dave Zino, executive chef for the Beef Checkoff, was also on hand to discuss the power of umami and beef cookery.

Scientific and consumer research experts lead participants through an exploration of the many food choices and discussed the latest research.

Guest speakers included Doug Paddon-Jones, associate professor at the University of Texas; Penny Kris Etherton, distinguished professor from Penn State University; Terry Etherton, distinguished profes-

or from Penn State University; and Mark McCully, assistant vice president of production for Certified Angus Beef.

The participants finished the first day of the event with a beef and wine pairing dinner in one of the CIA's award-winning restaurants. The dinner was sponsored in part by the New York Wine and Grape Foundation and Certified Angus Beef.

Day 2 led the dietitians through the rolling hills of Millbrook, N.Y., to Rally Farms. Allen Lawyer, manager of Rally Farms, helped the dietitians gain true understanding of beef production on a hayride touring the farm's seedstock operation.

Participants also heard from a diverse panel of farmers representing all segments of the beef industry. The panelists included Craig Uden, Nebraska feed lot; Dennis Byrne, Pennsylvania cow/calf; Allen Lawyer, New York seedstock; Pattie Dolarhide, Cargill-Kansas; Mike Baker, beef cattle Extension specialist at Cornell University; and Paul Slayton, Pennsylvania producer, who acted as the panel moderator.

The colorful New York foliage was the setting for a lunch on the farm sponsored in part by Certified Angus Beef.

## Allegro Cooks Up Beef Backer Award Honors

BEDFORD, Pa. — Following a difficult selection process, the Pennsylvania Beef Council has announced that The Allegro Restaurant, Altoona, is the state winner of the 2011 Foodservice Beef Backer Contest.

This award program recognizes restaurants that go the extra mile in marketing beef in their establishments and on their menus. Applicants from across the state submitted entries to showcase their innovation and leadership in many areas, including creative menu applications, new cut utilization and effective communication programs.

Allegro will receive an award plaque to display in the restaurant and will represent the commonwealth in the national foodservice competition. National Beef Backer winners will be announced in January at the cattle industry annual convention in Nashville, Tenn.

Established in 1978, Allegro offers

Italian cuisine created from time-honored, family recipes. The menu features a number of decadent steak and veal entrees, including a tasty filet mignon and mouth-watering veal medallions.

Allegro has also been recognized with veal menuing awards, boasting more than 15 veal inspired selections.

"For many years, we have taken great pride in purchasing the finest quality beef and then giving it that special touch before it gets to the plate," said Allegro owner Daniel Taddei. "With all the great restaurants in Pennsylvania, it is quite an honor to receive this award."

Allegro is open for lunch 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. every Thursday and Friday and for dinner 4-9 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Weekend dinner hours are 4-9:30 p.m. Friday and 4-10 p.m. Saturday.

To view a complete menu, visit [www.allegro-restaurant.com](http://www.allegro-restaurant.com) or contact the restaurant at 814-946-5216.



## Check for Grilling Winner

Katie Coughlin from Leonardtown, Md., was selected as the grand prize winner in the 2011 Stay Home Grill Out promotion. She is a shopper at Weis Markets in Sunbury, Pa. The beef check-off, through the Northeast Beef Promotion Initiative (NEBPI) and the Pennsylvania Beef Council, partnered with 18 retailers throughout the northeast to launch the promotion. In total, 315 store locations featured recipe booklets, shelf wobblers and meat department posters from May through September. Shoppers had the chance to win a grand prize of \$500 in free groceries by entering in at [StayHomeGrillOut.com](http://StayHomeGrillOut.com). Runner-up prizes included 10-piece kitchen knife sets and The Healthy Beef Cookbook.

