

Quality Care Matters



A Column about Beef & Dairy Animal Care

Chef Tour Showcases Pennsylvania Beef Industry, From Field-to-Fork

On Sept. 26, approximately 40 chefs and foodservice professionals boarded a bus bound for Lancaster County to learn more about the beef they market on their menus. Coordinated by the Pennsylvania Beef Council and meat purveyor Indian Ridge Provisions, Telford, the tour's first stop was Masonic Village Farms, Elizabethtown, a cow/calf operation and regional Environmental Stewardship Award Program (ESAP) winner.

At Masonic Village, participants met Farm Operations Supervisor Frank Stoltzfus. Stoltzfus answered questions about antibiotic and implant use with cattle. "We refer to the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) manual as our guide for cattle care. We follow all the protocols in the manual and then some," said Stoltzfus. An early adopter of BQA, Masonic Farms retails their beef, promoting BQA in all promotional materials. Reflecting on the questions asked by his farm visitors, Stoltzfus said, "It was a good opportunity to close the link between farm and consumers. They understand what we do and can tell their customers about it."

After a lunch that featured Pennsylvania raised prime rib at Gus's Keystone Family Restaurant, Mount Joy, participants traveled to Smucker's Meats, Mount Joy. A small processor, Smucker's harvests approximately 50 head of beef cattle, per week. "We don't buy or sell, we are just the processor," Jay Smucker, owner of Smucker's Meats, told the group. "We complete the work order, and our customers take it from there." Smucker noted that many of their customers sell their beef at farmers' markets or as freezer beef.

Mike Smucker, Jay's son, also explained that they will do customer packaging to help farmers build their brand recognition and that they "try to keep our pricing structure simple for our customers." Jay reiterated to the group that their company goal "is to add value to what our customers bring to us."

Following a tour of the Smucker's fabrication, packaging, and smoking rooms, tour participants viewed the plant's processing floor and had



Darwin and Bernard Nissley, Mount Joy, give a tour of their feedlot.

questions for the owners, especially about food safety. Like Smucker's, the restaurateurs implement a HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) system in their business and nodded as Mike described the paper work associated with safety documentation. "We keep temperature logs throughout the plant, including the coolers. I have 10-15 notebooks in my office, full of records," he said. "Our commitment to food safety is stronger because I'm focused on those records. We try to fulfill USDA regulations and make it work for us," said Mike. "We have a wonderful crew here and appreciate the help we have to run our business."

The final stop on the field-to-fork tour was the Nissley Brothers Farm, a feedlot operated by brothers Darwin and Bernard Nissley, Mount Joy. Seventh generation farmers, the Nissleys finish approximately 1,500 - 1,700 cattle per year. Chefs asked great questions at this farm, too, particularly about feeding systems. "We finish our cattle on corn, versus grass, because our land values are too high. It's more conducive to growing crops than growing grass," Darwin told the group. The Nissleys also utilize byproducts in their feeding program, and explained the basics of various energy rations.

"We feed for muscle, as compared to dairy farmers who feed their cows to produce milk," said Bernard.

During conversations with the chefs, the Nissleys learned there are many similarities between the restaurant business and the cattle business. "These restaurants deal with a huge time commitment, labor issues, and slim profit margins — all issues that we struggle with every day," Darwin noted. "It's always interesting to see how other businesses work."

Participants enjoyed the tour. For Alan Worman, The Local, Souderton, breakfast and lunch meals average just 35 miles from farm to plate. "These tours remind me I can buy wholesale (through Indian Ridge Provisions) and still get the level of product we need," he said.

Mike Devitt, vice president of marketing, Indian Ridge Provisions, thinks "Getting honest answers to tough questions, like growth hormones and antibiotics, helps people understand why they are used and can make decisions based on the merit of those practices."

In Devitt's experience, the tour gives chefs and restaurateurs the education they really crave. "They want to know what they are buying, from where, and its relevance to what their restaurant is trying to achieve," he said. "In a broader sense, all participants come away knowing that we (Pennsylvania Beef Council, farmers, and Indian Ridge) all care about the beef we sell. We believe in the process and the people who produce the product."

Representatives from the following restaurants participated in the Field to Farm tour:

- Maize Restaurant - Perkasie, Pa.
- The Local - Souderton, Pa.
- Merion Cricket Club - Ardmore, Pa.
- Saint David's Golf Club - Wayne, Pa.
- Through the Looking Glass - Jim Thorpe, Pa.
- The Cosmopolitan - Allentown, Pa.
- The National Hotel - Frenchtown, N.J.
- Thyme Restaurant - Phillipsburg, N.J.
- Hawke Pointe Golf Club - Washington, N.J.

This tour was funded by a Federation Grant, through the Federation of State Beef Councils. To learn more about educational Beef Checkoff tours, contact Kristi Kassimer, Pennsylvania Beef Council office, at 888-4BEEFPA or kkassimer@pabeef.org.



Arika Snyder of Pennsylvania, top right, was selected as a member of the 2012 National Beef Ambassador team. The 2012 team is, front row, from left, Kim Rounds, California and Rossi Blinson, North Carolina. Back row from left, Emily Jack, Texas; John Weber, Minnesota; and Arika Snyder.

2012 National Beef Ambassadors Announced Pa. Ambassador Joins National Team

Arika Snyder (Pennsylvania), John Weber (Minnesota), Kim Rounds (California), Rossie Blinson (North Carolina), and Emily Jack (Texas) were chosen as the 2012 National Beef Ambassador Team at the annual competition, funded in part by the Beef Checkoff, held Sept. 30-Oct. 2 at the Shisler Conference Center and Hilton Garden Inn in Wooster, Ohio. Eighteen senior contestants, ages 17-20, were judged in the areas of consumer promotion, classroom presentation, media interview technique and issues response.

Contestants from throughout the country vied for a place on this elite team of agriculture advocates and \$5,000 in cash prizes sponsored exclusively by Farm Credit. Additionally, the American National Cattle-Women Foundation, Inc. gave five educational scholarships totaling \$5,000. For the past several years, one Beef Ambassador has also been chosen for a prestigious USDA internship in Washington D.C.

This year's contest also hosted a junior competition for youth beef industry advocates ages 12-16. 11 passionate contestants vied for cash prizes, competing in two

judged categories: Media Interview and consumer demonstration. The first place winner was Austin Gaspard (Louisiana), the second place winner was Abigail Grisledale (California), and the third place winner was Rachel Purdy (Wyoming). They all took home checks sponsored exclusively by Farm Credit for their top scores.

While preparing for this national beef promotion and education competition, youth across the nation learn about beef and the beef industry within their family and with support from state CattleWomen, Cattlemen's associations and state beef councils. The preparation highlights industry issues of current consumer interest. Winners of the state competitions compete at the national level receiving additional media training. After the event, as youth ambassadors, they speak to industry issues and misconceptions, while educating peers and others about food safety, nutrition and the Beef Checkoff Program at consumer events, in the classroom and online.

Visit www.nationalbeefambassador.org or www.ancw.org for more information or contact NBAP Manager Sarah J. Bohnenkamp at 303-850-3440 or sbohenkamp@beef.org.

Rock 'N Roll with Veal

BEDFORD, Pa. — Through the Beef Checkoff's Northeast Beef Promotion Initiative (NEBPI) and in partnership with the Pennsylvania Beef Council, veal was center stage at the Philadelphia Rock n' Roll Half Marathon Health & Fitness Expo, Sept. 16-17.

An estimated 25,000 runners and their families toured the expo during the two-day event. National Beef Ambassadors Kelli Fulkerson, Michigan and Austin Joyce, Texas, also lent a hand in serving more than 2,600 veal bratwurst samples, courtesy of Marcho Farms, Franconia, Pa., to eager expo visitors and runners.

Expo attendees learned the importance of powering up with protein. Whether they were beginning athletes or seasoned pros, they learned that following a healthy diet before, during and after exercise or a race will maximize performance and recovery. Meals that include lean beef provide athletes with the essential amino acids they need to be on top of their game.

Christie Brown, NEBPI Director of Retail and Foodservice, was powered by lean beef when she ran the half marathon sporting her Team BEEF jersey. To view more pictures of the event, visit the Pennsylvania Beef Council Facebook page.

BQA Training Scheduled

Please visit www.pa-bqa.org for more details on these upcoming trainings, contact Nichole Hockenberry at nhockenberry@pabeef.org or 888-4BEEFPA.

The training dates are as follows:

Oct. 19 — BQA Training, Wayne County Cooperative Extension Office, 648 Park Street, Suite E, Honesdale, PA 18431. Recertification is from 6 - 7 p.m., followed by a classroom training from 7 - 9 p.m.



Jay Smucker, Smucker's Meats, answers questions from tour participants at his processing plant.