

Buckhead Beef Offers Perspectives

Pre-symposium “Marketing for Black Ink” seminar hosted by Certified Angus Beef LLC, Monday, Dec. 5, 2005

Presenter: Chad Stine, Buckhead Beef

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA (Dec. 5, 2005) — What do restaurateurs want from the beef industry? Chad Stine, a senior vice-president of merchandising with Georgia-based Buckhead Beef, a specialty meat company of Sysco Foods, shared his company’s perspectives with participants of the “Marketing for Black Ink” seminar hosted by Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) Dec. 5, 2005, in Rapid City. The event was a kick-off to the Range Beef Cow Symposium being conducted in South Dakota this week.

Stine shared that his company is always seeking to market a premium product. He defined premium as “opportunities to sell a product for more money.” But, he added, that premium may not always be what one thinks. For instance, USDA Prime and branded beef are premium products. However, USDA Select can also be a “premium product” at times during the year because of supply and demand.

Stine stressed that premium is really determined by the customer and if there is a market for a product for which they are willing to pay more. For instance, he said he doesn’t see Yield Grade 4 and 5 animals in his cutshop because they request the packer trim the carcasses and assume the trim loss.

“I need more high-quality products, specifically Prime,” he explained, “so I’m willing to make the trade off.”

As other examples of creating premium products, Stine pointed to the flat-iron steak – created from the chuck. He also gave examples of cutting the short rib into a new cut called the Tomahawk and dry-aging beef as a means to create premium products.

“Our chefs are looking for solutions. So we can’t just focus on quality. We need to give them more solutions and that means more unique premium products,” he said.

Stine said another area for which he is seeing demand is portion size. He explained that restaurants want smaller ribeyes — not 16- to 18-oz. rib steaks — because of plate presentation.

“Less is more. Twelve-ounce ribeyes are ideal,” Stine told producers in the audience. “So ribeye size needs to be controlled, and that’s correlated to carcass weights.”

Looking ahead, Stine said premium programs will continue to grow as restaurant and foodservice drive the demand. An area he anticipates that will be particularly popular includes natural beef programs. “We see this as our largest category for the next five years,” he



Chad Stine of Georgia-based Buckhead Beef shared some insights on capturing market premiums.

concluded.

— by Kindra Gordon, field editor, Angus Productions Inc.

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