



Promoting Hereford Beef



Kenn Fultz, Ridley's Family Markets meat director, and Frank Rogers, local Hereford breeder, visit outside the store in Buhl, Idaho, during the Independence Day celebration.

Summer Beef Blitz program is a success.

by Amber Jones

As summer comes to an end, Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) LLC staff is excited about what was accomplished with the summer Beef Blitz program. Relationships between the CHB program and retail stores have become stronger than ever, and retail stores are looking forward to continuing the events each year.

The CHB Beef Blitz program was initially created to be a promotional program showcasing underutilized cuts. Little did the CHB LLC staff know this program would be so much more.

The main task of CHB LLC is to envision an integrated promotion that centers on Certified Hereford Beef® and then sell those ideas to the retail partners, says Arden Gremmert,

CHB LLC interim general manager. Several ideas are presented to the management of the retail chains, and then a specific plan is crafted to meet the stores' needs and objectives for the promotion.

The blitz program focuses the meat director's time and attention on Certified Hereford Beef with creative ideas and funds to execute the plan. CHB LLC staff build close, personal relationships with the meat departments in each store, and the staff make sure each detail is covered and promises made are fulfilled to properly manage the promotion.

The program was a team effort. In some places local Hereford breeders were able to come out and educate consumers about Hereford cattle and the industry as a whole. Retail store staff along with CHB LLC staff were always on hand to answer questions, and on some occasions, CHB ambassadors Mary Ann Burg and Anna Rhodus would present educational and cooking demonstrations.

In many cases, putting together these events has allowed the retail stores to also build relationships with Hereford producers in their areas and has opened many doors for future promotional opportunities and increased awareness of Certified Hereford Beef with consumers who otherwise would have not known about the product.

United Supermarkets

The summer Beef Blitz program kicked off in March with the launch of Certified Hereford Beef in United Supermarkets of Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Hereford Association and CHB LLC along with United Supermarkets sponsored a fund-raising promotion in Ponca City, Okla. The Oklahoma Beef Council also helped out by offering supplies for the event.

Community is very important to United Supermarkets, so involving local youth organizations and community programs was a goal for the event. "It is important to build relationships with the retailers and to build the community relationship," says Shonda Anderson, CHB LLC account manager. "You want the community to know that our retailers are more than just another grocery store."

Members of the Ponca City FFA chapter cooked and sold steak sandwiches to customers. The chapter raised \$1,600 to contribute for the group's trip to the Oklahoma state FFA convention. Along with the money raised for the FFA chapter, \$400 was raised for the Oklahoma Hereford Scholarship fund.

Not only was there support from CHB LLC and Oklahoma Hereford producers during the rollout of the product, but CHB ambassadors also came out and showed consumers the importance of Certified Hereford Beef. The ambassadors visited six different stores in one week, presenting cooking demonstrations and handing out samples.

"Consumers have been very impressed with the tenderness and with us stressing the consistency of the product," Berg says. "Whatever they get today, a month from now when they purchase it again, they want to know that they are going to have that same consistency in tenderness that they got before. I think that's really important to people."

Having experienced such a successful Certified Hereford Beef rollout of the product, United Supermarkets organized similar fund-raisers during its 91st anniversary celebration during May. United Supermarkets raised several thousand dollars for local community activities and an additional \$1,000 was raised for the Oklahoma Hereford Scholarship fund, Anderson says.

This first Beef Blitz of the summer allowed CHB LLC to plan and organize other events for its different retail chain customers throughout the country.

Ridley's Family Markets

Like United Supermarkets in Oklahoma, community is important to Ridley's Family Markets in Idaho. Ridley's stores in Middleton and Buhl, Idaho, took advantage of the great summer weather and held their



Hank, the Hereford steer, makes an appearance at the Middleton, Idaho, 4th of July parade.



Harry, the Hereford bull, looks on as the festivities continue in Buhl, Idaho.

Beef Blitzes during Independence Day celebrations.

Ridley's Family Markets, Idaho Beef Council, Idaho Hereford Association and CHB LLC, all assisted with organizing four events July 1-4.

To prepare for and promote the event in Idaho, Rick Haines — also known as "Haines at the Reins," a morning radio personality on the Independent Ag Network — interviewed CHB LLC and Ridley's staff one month prior to the event. Information from the interview allowed listeners to learn about Certified Hereford Beef from industry professionals in all facets of the CHB program.

"This year the 4th of July fell on a Wednesday, and with the holiday in the middle of the week, I was a little skeptical on what our turnout would be," says Frank Rogers, a longtime resident of Buhl and lifetime Hereford breeder. "I'm surprised. We had people lined up before we opened at 11:00 a.m., and it's almost 4:30 p.m., and we're still serving."

During the festivities there were some special appearances. Hank, the Hereford steer, made his debut appearance in the 4th of July parade in Middleton, and Ariot, one of Idaho's prize-winning bulls, was featured as a special guest at the Buhl Ridley's Family Market.

During the four events, more than 1,500 community members of Middleton and Buhl were fed. What did it take to satisfy the appetite of this crowd? "More than 150 lb. of peppers were marinated in fresh lemon and butter, 50 lb. of mushrooms were cut, 2,000 cans of soda and bottles of water were chilled, and most importantly, 500 lb. of CHB steaks and hamburgers were grilled to perfection," says Kenn Fultz, meat director of Ridley's Family Markets. "All in all, I consider that a success."

Ridley's Family Markets staff hope that this year's Independence Day celebration can become an annual event where each year consumers can anticipate the festivities, the fun and the smell of grilled Certified Hereford Beef steak sandwiches.

Hen House Markets

Hen House Markets and CHB LLC worked closely with the

Kansas Beef Council and Good Natured Family Farms to put together a two-month promotion to promote the healthful benefits of eating lean beef items and to advertise underutilized beef cuts sold by both CHB LLC and Good Natured Family Farms. A total of 20 in-store demonstrations were conducted from June 23 to Aug. 26 in the 12 Hen House stores in the Kansas City area.

Advertising was important with this promotion. Highway billboards, informative brochures and radio commercials played a huge role in getting the word out. The slogan, as obvious as it might seem, was created to catch the eye of the consumer, "Beef. For the Health of It."

The blitz was built around the National Cattleman's Beef Association's recently released cookbook, "The Healthy Beef Cookbook." Using the cookbook as a focus gave the opportunity to showcase these underutilized cuts in healthful and flavorful recipes in all the Hen House Markets.

Because CHB LLC partnered with Good Natured Family Farms for this promotion, marketing opportunities doubled and crossed over into marketing with fresh produce as well. Each recipe in the brochures and flyers that were available to customers included a minimum of five fresh ingredients and helped stimulate summer mealtime ideas for consumers.

Kansas City-based professional chefs, Jeff Burges and Adam Stotts, prepared a different recipe each weekend, and samples were handed out to Hen House customers in the store. These demonstrations allowed for direct contact with the consumers.

As part of the Hen House Beef Blitz, Shonda Anderson and Anna Rhodus were interviewed by one of Kansas City's noteworthy chefs and restaurant owners, Chef Jasper Mirabile, on his Saturday morning radio talk show, "Live! From Jasper's Kitchen."

Chef Jasper, being familiar with the quality and consistency of Certified Hereford Beef, was excited to learn more about the



Mary Ann Berg, CHB ambassador, presents a cooking and educational demonstration for consumers at United Supermarkets in Enid, Okla.

rich history and culture that the Hereford breed brings to the Midwest. Rhodus and Anderson talked extensively about the inception of the American Hereford Association and its long-standing alliance with Kansas City.

To hear a podcast of the interview, visit Chef Jasper's Blog Web site, www.jasperskc.com. The CHB show is number 29 in the podcast link. Also be sure to check out the ingredients in



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the "All American Hamburger" recipe, featuring Certified Hereford Beef product for Aug. 15, 2007, under the blog link.

The demonstrations in the Hen House Markets allowed CHB LLC staff to create a Beef Blitz that reached consumers on a totally different level than those of United Supermarkets and Ridley's Family Markets. The end results for Hen House Markets showed increased beef sales and a more healthful perception of beef by consumers.

The program

The Beef Blitz program is a tool for retail stores to utilize in promoting the Certified Hereford Beef product and in educating consumers about what Certified Hereford Beef has to offer at the table. Because each event



Shane Hickman, Ridley's Middleton meat cutter; Jesse Hernandez, Ridley's Middleton meat manager; and Shonda Anderson, CHB LLC account manager, help grill steak sandwiches in Buhl, Idaho.

was tailored for individual retail chains, unique marketing promotions were developed with the goal the stores would sell more Certified Hereford Beef.

"Every Beef Blitz plan is designed to best utilize the advertising resources of the grocer to the highest benefit of the grocer and Certified Hereford Beef," Gremmert says. "Actual positive sales results, as defined by the store management, are our report card and are critical to the success of the meat director and his stores."

These promotions not only helped the retail stores carrying Certified Hereford Beef but also helped introduce some of the Hereford producers to communities. "I try to incorporate local producers whenever possible," Anderson says. "In the end, that's who we are doing the blitz promotions for."

Retaining the beef business of CHB LLC retailers year after year is the key to growing sales of Certified Hereford Beef long-term. The more valuable CHB sales promotions are to the retailer, the more likely retailers will keep selling the product, Gremmert says.

"Successful promotions are addictive. The better our plans work for added sales and profits, the more often our retailers make the decision to promote CHB over other items," Gremmert says. "Marketing opportunities drive performance, and when we grow the CHB tonnage, we draw more Hereford cattle through the system. Our goal is to build on this cycle each year." **HW**



Shonda Anderson, CHB LLC account manager, and Adam Stotts, professional chef, work together during a Hen House Market weekend demonstration for "The Healthy Beef Cookbook."

