

Going Above and Beyond

Sharing their dedication to ranching earns the Walter family the 2022 CAB Ambassador Award.

Story and photos by Jessica Travis, Certified Angus Beef

A cool morning fog slowly lifts to unveil a herd of black cattle juxtaposed against the towering Rocky Mountains. Riders moving around them come into focus, trotting along on horseback.

It's a normal day near Hudson, Colo., for the Walter family. Yet, the view is uniquely awe-inspiring for visitors who have never stepped foot on a ranch.

As cows come in closer, visitors take in the far-reaching pastures and breathtaking views.

Some snap photos as they feed the cows a handful of grass, while others shyly inch away as a curious young calf moves closer.

"My favorite thing to showcase on the ranch is definitely our cattle and our cattle practices," Trevor says. "I take a lot of pride in the quality we have and the way we raise them."

For the Walter Family, there's no better backdrop to introduce people to the place where beef begins.

The spirit of hospitality and work to share how they raise high-quality beef earned the Walter family the 2022 Certified Angus Beef (CAB) Ambassador Award.



WALTERS ANGUS

(from left) are Trevor Walter, with wife, Melissa, and children Tilden and Cealy, Terry and Becky Walter, Ty Walter, with wife, Jazlyn, and daughter Hadley.

A targeted approach

Teaching an appreciation for Angus cattle is something that comes naturally to Terry and Becky Walter. They've built Walter Angus into a fifth-generation Angus seedstock operation with their children, Trevor, Ty and Katelyn. Today the family

specializes in high-elevation, high-quality genetics.

"We're always trying to make balanced cattle," Terry says. "Birthweight is absolutely important to us, and growth of every kind. For me personally, marbling is king. We're trying to put as much marbling

in these cattle as we can, without sacrificing functionality. But in my opinion, marbling is what pays bills.”

Cows still have to get the job done. Their dedication to genetic improvement is matched with their focus on high-altitude performance.

“We put a big focus on elevation — there’s a lot of good-quality mountain grass pastures that can only be utilized by running cattle on it,” Terry says.

The Walter Angus herd spends at least six months in these mountain pastures, which range from 6,000 to 11,000 feet (ft.) in elevation.

Bred to handle the altitude, they also slowly graze cattle during the warm summer and fall months, training them over time to adjust to the elevation. All bulls marketed through their annual February sale are tested for pulmonary artery pressure (PAP) at 10,000 ft.

Another key component of their breeding program is docility. They’re effective at creating cattle that can be good working partners, knowing this ties to performance on the plate.

“The docility and how we treat the cattle through our handling practices ultimately creates a better end product,” Trevor says.



“Otherwise, any stress will carry through the animal.”

Indeed, their dedication to low-stress management and intentional breeding practices pays off.

A look through sale books shows the CAB *Targeting the Brand*™ logo next to most of their bulls. During the past four years, 97% of their cattle graded Choice or higher, with 51% qualifying for CAB, and 13% grading as Prime.

A good story

Raising great bulls that produce high-quality beef is a feat on its own, but the Walter family takes the next step to connect with the people merchandising the beef their genetics create. For Terry, engaging with folks unfamiliar with ranching is an extension of his business philosophy.

“You don’t get very far in the bull business if you don’t have total honesty,” he says. “Respect has to be earned.”

Many of the groups who visit Walter Angus are foodservice salespeople who merchandise CAB every day or chefs serving the brand at their restaurants. They’ve also hosted food bloggers, media and made time for video and photo crews to capture their story to share in CAB training materials and ad

campaigns.

“I enjoy talking to people, especially as society gets disconnected from agriculture,” Terry says. “I want people to know that ranching isn’t easy, it takes a lot of work producing high-quality cattle so people can feel good about eating beef.”

Ty says interacting with those groups offers “a meeting of the minds,” and the opportunity to learn from each other, answer questions and understand how the different sectors of the beef industry rely on each other.

“We’re just one family, really,” he says. “What other company or brand out there brings everyone together to collaborate and learn from each other, and see where we can go in the future?”

Hosting people also offers the opportunity to showcase their work

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and dedication to raising cattle to higher standards.

"It's really rewarding to be able to show that the product they sell as the *Certified Angus Beef*® brand is no accident and demonstrate how much time and thinking ahead goes into it," Ty says. "The quality, care and all the little details that go into our product that many don't realize."

Opening their ranch is more than putting a face to the hands that raised a delicious steak but understanding the intention behind each decision, taking care of both the land and livestock.

The mountain pastures are great for cattle, but the Walters want people to know that cows are great for the pastures, too.

"The cattle help break up the decomposing trees that have succumbed to beetle rot," Trevor says. "Grazing helps prevent wildfires and creates a positive ecosystem for

the land they're on."

Their grazing encourages deeper roots and healthier grasses.


"We make the land better with our cattle," Ty says, noting the increased forage production and soil health. "God created this land to be grazed by cattle. Without them, and the grasses and sagebrush, the land would blow away to Kansas."

Trevor adds, "This ground would sit vacant, so we're able to bring our cattle on and graze the ground. And in doing so, it's a huge benefit to the ecosystem, grasses, and biodiversity."

Much like everything else on the ranch, hosting a tour is a family affair. Terry, Trevor and Ty showcase the livestock and speak to their genetics. As for Becky and Katelyn, along with Trevor's wife, Melissa, and children, Tilden and Cealy, and Ty's wife, Jazlyn, and daughter, Hadley, share about life on an Angus ranch.

Pulling out of the driveway, visitors

head home with more than a camera roll full of beautiful pictures and cow selfies to post on social media. They leave as friends who know that CAB is raised by good families, in a way that's good for animals and the environment — inspired to sell more of it.

"I want groups to leave our ranch knowing that there's a family in Hudson, Colorado, that loves Angus cattle," Terry says. "That we're striving to make the best beef possible, and our mission here is hitting that CAB target, but more than that, it's knowing that we care about the cattle." 

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