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## **Educating the next generation**

*Culinary competition teaches young chefs about beef production, value cuts, and consumer demand*

A lot of folks in the beef industry worry about where the next generation of ranchers will come from. But cattlemen with real foresight wonder about tomorrow's consumers.

Certified Angus Beef LLC recently partnered with its licensed distributor, Performance Food Group, at the Culinary Institute of Virginia (CIV). Their joint mission: to educate the next generation of chefs on preparing high-quality beef dishes that will capture future consumer demand.

The inaugural CIV Culinary Scholarship Competition challenged young chefs to develop new menu items featuring non-traditional *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand cuts. With that came an education on the utilization of the flank, flat iron, teres major and center cut sirloin (baseball cut) steaks.

Andrew Mosquera was on the winning culinary team. The Philippines native will graduate this fall from the culinary school and says he hopes to someday own his own restaurant. The competition opened his eyes to more variety in his protein selection for entrees.

"I learned about all the cuts of meat that aren't being used enough," he says. "I liked working with the teres major – I had never heard of that cut before, but now I've started using it. It's almost the same as the tenderloin, but cheaper, which is really cool."

Mosquera and his partner, Gary Woolard Jr., focused on the teres major in their winning Steak Medallion dish. The pair also prepared Steak Kabobs featuring CAB brand center-cut sirloin. According to CIV Director of Student Services Andy Gladstein, students who participated gained a greater understanding of beef cuts and value products.

"Being asked to use some non-traditional cuts certainly forced them to think in different ways," Gladstein says. "They really had to develop their menus and put time into developing recipes after studying those cuts of beef they were less familiar with."

Mosquera says he was surprised by the product's performance after preparing his dish. "We didn't even have to season our beef," he says. "We didn't use anything, and it still tasted great. That was something that surprised me after working with the CAB product."

In addition to creating dishes, designing a menu and preparing product, students were evaluated on their knowledge of the CAB brand and recognition of beef products. Participants identified eight cuts of beef and determined if they were the CAB brand or USDA select.

“The students learned a lot,” Gladstein says. “You hear about different types of beef, but at the end of the day, it comes down to knowing what the difference is to the consumer. They saw, ‘Wow, that’s the difference between Select and a product like CAB!’ And through all the studying I’ve done, I know what result that’s going to have for the customer.”

Mosquera and Woolard were each awarded a \$1,000 scholarship for winning. The second-place students won \$500 each and third place \$250. Perhaps more importantly, Mosquera says he learned more about creating high-quality products that meet consumer demand. With his goals set on restaurant ownership, he hopes to provide future customers with that experience.

“This makes me want to get good, quality products like Certified Angus Beef – I think that’s really good stuff,” he says.

**END**