



"CHB Bites" is a column designed to keep you in-the-know about Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) program happenings. CHB LLC is celebrating 20 years with a "Farm-to-Fork" series featuring how Herefords become the ultimate eating experience. You can also follow CHB on Facebook at facebook.com/CertifiedHerefordBeef.



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## Greater Omaha Packing Co. Inc.

Certified Hereford Beef (CHB®) LLC has a relationship with two quality-conscious beef packing companies. Last month we focused on National Beef Packing Co., and this month we visit with packer partner Greater Omaha Packing Co. Inc.

Greater Omaha traces its roots back to 1920. When Herman Cohen left the Army following World War I he took his 100 dollar fortune to the stockyards in Omaha, Neb., and invested in cattle.

Herman was soon purchasing cattle and selling beef. He developed a reputation as a man who gave his word and kept it, qualities which helped him grow Greater Omaha through the depression and into the future. In 1945 Cohen's son-in-law, Pennie Z. Davis, joined the business as a partner and would later go on to become the president of the company. Davis' son, Henry, joined the company in 1973 and learned the beef business.

Fast-forward to the 1990s and things are getting pretty lively for Greater Omaha. In 1992 Henry made a pivotal decision to incorporate value-added beef and boxed beef, along with the addition of a

distribution company and a global export company.

During the late '90s, Greater Omaha started building. It built a new fabrication plant and a new slaughter facility. Then, it began to add onto current facilities. This expansion culminated in 2013 with completion of a 40,000-square-foot addition to its processing facility, ensuring Greater Omaha can continue to grow and provide excellent service to its customers.

Greater Omaha sales team member and CHB liaison Nick Rausch shares the company's mission statement, "Our mission is simple. We will produce the finest beef products in a manner that is uncompromising in food safety; respect our customers and suppliers by treating them fairly and honoring every commitment that we make; and provide a proper work environment for everyone at Greater Omaha and maintain an unyielding dedication to the health, safety, and betterment of our employees and their families."

He adds that Greater Omaha's vision is, "Our products will always be of the highest standard for safety and quality, as we continue to serve our customers in ways that consistently exceed

their expectations." Both statements point to a company that understands the importance of knowing the consumer. This is especially vital considering that today's consumer is typically generations removed from the family farm but ever increasingly wants more information on where his food comes from, what inputs go into producing it and how the animal is treated.

So just how does Greater Omaha tackle the food-safety issue? Well, head-on of course! The harvesting plant, completed in 2001, is one of the most sophisticated beef processing facilities in the country. The processing department was built with modern bacteria intervention strategies in mind and also with room to accommodate future changes in food handling safety.

Greater Omaha uses multiple hurdle concepts combined with twelve separate processes that make each process a proven pathogen intervention program. In food safety, the term "multiple hurdle" refers to a series of multiple low-level interventions that are sequentially ordered or concurrently are found to be more effective at reducing and eliminating microbes than the sum of all the individual processes or "hurdles." In the packer's world, it's the equivalent of washing the dishes before you put them in the dishwasher; ultimately, it makes for a much cleaner and safer product.

The partnership with Greater Omaha and CHB traces its roots back to 1999, when Greater Omaha officially became licensed after doing some



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custom work with the foundation of CHB cattle. Angelo Fili, executive vice president for Greater Omaha, says CHB is a great product for them. "It has a heritage that is known and respected," he explains. "It is a pedigreed breed behind a single brand. The fact that the Hereford breed focused on a single brand makes CHB unique in the marketplace. CHB is a breed behind a brand, not just a brand."

Greater Omaha typically harvests around 2,400 cattle a day, five days a week. Weekly, it harvests 1,500-2,000 potential CHB cattle, and around 1,200-1,500 of those ultimately earn the CHB status. What are the requirements to be a CHB product? The criteria are listed in Figure 1, provided by Greater Omaha.

In 2014 Greater Omaha helped CHB reach the 50 million lb. mark and ensured that CHB had its best year yet. Providing an adequate supply of high-quality Hereford cattle to meet the growing demand for CHB is a promise that must be met.

This effort has helped increase Greater Omaha cattle volume by 15.4% identified and 18.2% certified. Greater Omaha boasts of harvesting 2,000 head in one week for the CHB program with the goal of reaching 2,300 per week on a regular basis. Greater Omaha's growth has complemented the already 4,500 to 5,000 carcasses per week certified through National Beef Packing Co.

Greater Omaha is looking to surpass last year's record, and 2015 is off to a great start. Trey Befort, CHB LLC supply chain manager, adds that Greater Omaha is having another year of positive growth and for fiscal year 2015 has more than 35,000 head of CHB certified. Greater Omaha's continued growth is going to help CHB LLC reach its goal of 100 million lb. of CHB in the next five years.

One way to do that is through increased carcass utilization. "This means utilizing sustainable critical mass volume of the 850 lb. average carcass at a 'premium' in order to make a profit," Fili states. In essence, it is about having a program that sells all 850 lb. at market price or above.

"Many brands that have come and gone in the industry sold a few parts of the carcass at a premium, but failed to achieve critical balance

Figure 1: CHB specifications

**Certified Hereford Beef<sup>®</sup>**

- USDA Certified Program
- Hereford & Hereford x British Breeds
  - No Dairy Influence
  - No Brahman Influence
  - No Continental Influence
- Carcass Weight Range 600-1000 lbs.
- Ribeye Size 10-16 inches only
- Grade A Maturity (30 mos. and younger)
- Marbling Equivalent to Choice & Select
  - Choice/Select Blend of approx. 70/30
  - Marbling score of Select or Higher
  - Medium to Fine Marbling Texture

**Quality Assurance Checks**  
**BREED + FEED + AGE**

- ✓ Hereford Genetics
- ✓ Corn Fed 100-days
- ✓ A Maturity
- ✓ Humane Harvest Facility
- ✓ Sustainability Initiatives

Product of USA

Custom half-pack "small box" offerings.

needed to survive," Fili says. Greater Omaha is investing in Hereford cattle for the long haul and maximizing carcass utilization makes CHB a more sustainable brand for the future.

Greater Omaha's favorite cut is the ribeye. Plain and simple, there is a year-round market for ribeyes. This cut is well suited for Hereford because the size of the breed is still moderate when compared to other breed sizes, making ribeyes from Herefords ideal for most customer needs. The ribeye is the Hereford item that is in most demand.

In addition, consumers love the tenderness of CHB. Fili adds, "Once customers see the value and embrace the benefits of Hereford beef, they typically become long-term customers. This is in part because once they are sold on CHB, then it is harder for the competition to steal them."

If you are a Hereford breeder interested in learning how you can source your Hereford cattle to Greater Omaha, please reach out to Trey Befort at [tbefort@herefordbeef.org](mailto:tbefort@herefordbeef.org) or call 816-842-3757. **HW**

## A focus on community service

Not only is the partnership with Greater Omaha a benefit to our team, but the company also strives to make a difference in its community, too.

We could list all of Greater Omaha's recognized achievements and accomplishments in its community, but the two most prevalent are education and citizenship. To date, Greater Omaha has provided more than \$250,000 in tuition assistance through its annual scholarship program. It also believes in helping its community and has done so by helping more than 200 employees obtain their citizenship. Greater Omaha is a leader in its community; it truly shows it's a company that is about more than just the bottom line. **HW**