



"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.

**Farm-to-Fork**

- Part 1: Seedstock
- Part 2: Stocker
- Part 3: Feedlot
- Part 4: Packer
- Part 5: Retail
- Part 6: Foodservice**
- Part 7: Consumer
- Part 8: Future

## Dining out with CHB

This month we are exploring the "fork in the road" of Certified Hereford Beef (CHB®). Last month, the retail supermarket was the stop on the farm-to-fork tour of CHB. This month, CHB has made a left turn instead and headed down the foodservice distribution line where it ultimately would end up in one of the many fine-dining establishments.

Did you know that the foodservice industry is a \$660 billion industry in the U.S.? In fact, the industry is so large that more than half the adults in the world have worked in foodservice in some capacity during their lifetime. So, if you ever spent time working in a restaurant, a cafeteria, a campus dining hall, or for a caterer or vendor, then you worked in foodservice. The foodservice industry is broken into two groups – one side that prepares and serves the food and the other that provides services and distributes food and equipment needed by food providers.

Factor in a complicated and ever-increasing fast-paced lifestyle that makes cooking at home a challenge, and the food distribution industry enjoys steady growth year in and year out. In fact the National Restaurant Association projected sales of more than \$680 billion for 2014. CHB is proud to be a part of that success.

### CHB and foodservice

How is CHB successful in the foodservice industry? Well, the answer is simple. It is all about relationships. Our program would not be as successful as it is without the help of a great foodservice distributor like Sysco Minnesota. CHB LLC and Sysco Minnesota have been partnering since August 2010, and they currently serve more than 5,000 customers. Having that many customers means that there is a lot of great tasting Hereford beef moving across the plates of fine dining establishments. Sysco Minnesota moves

approximately 2.3 million lb. of CHB a year.

Why did Sysco Minnesota decide to partner with CHB LLC? Center of Plate, Premium Protein Specialist of Sysco Minnesota, June Dunn, says, "We are in a market that has multiple different 'Angus programs' from our competitors, so we felt the need to bring on something completely different, kind of a fresh start to our beef program. We were delighted with the overwhelming response from our customers."

Those responses enable CHB LLC to help Sysco Minnesota achieve its mission statement: "To market and deliver great products to our customers with exceptional service."

### Customers' choice

What do customers tell Sysco Minnesota about Certified Hereford Beef and why they choose it? "We hear about how juicy and tender the steaks are, and how it tastes like beef is supposed to taste. The ground chuck patties are a tremendous hit in this market as well. We stock many different sizes in both fresh and frozen," Dunn says.

How has CHB demand been with the rising prices? Dunn says, "Our beef sales are continuing to go up even with the higher prices. We have been talking to our customers about some newer underutilized cuts that are a little less expensive. We are starting to see a trend of smaller portions as well. A lot of our customers would still like to feature a nice cut of beef, but not necessarily a 16-20 oz. portion like in years past."

In the next few years, Sysco Minnesota is hoping to add some further processed CHB items like precooked prime rib, pot roast and even deli meat to enhance its customers' opportunities.

Dunn adds, "The decision

to bring CHB to our protein offerings was one of the best we could have made. It has set us apart from our competition. We sell a complete line of primals, portion cut steaks and burgers. Our partners at Greater Omaha Packing Co. Inc. are extremely helpful to work with. We have taken customers to their plant for tours, and each time we come back with another solid CHB customer. We also work with our local Hereford ranchers when we can, and have taken customers on tours to the farms, and invited them to join us at cuttings and restaurant openings. It is nice to be able to show them where their beef ends up. We look forward to our future with CHB."

### The Onion Grille

One of those customers that uses CHB is The Onion Grille located in Hastings, Minn. The restaurant opened in 2011 and serves CHB burgers, top sirloin, New York strips and ribeyes. Its in-house-special steak is a coffee crusted New York, Montreal ribeye. Its best-selling CHB item is the Widow Maker Burger. Picture a delicious CHB patty, topped with succulent pot roast, bacon, mushrooms, onions, cheese and onion rings.

Wendy Dodge-Agen, owner of The Onion Grille, has had CHB on the menu since day one. "I always get comments like, 'this is the best steak I have had in ages,' or 'why are the steaks so tender?' I am always getting compliments on the beef," she says.

Dodge-Agen says she chose to go with Sysco Minnesota and CHB because of Dunn. "She has been instrumental in the opening of this restaurant and was extremely excited to tell me about CHB. We have a few Hereford ranches within 30 miles of Hastings, Minn., so I thought this would be a great way to feature and support our Minnesota ranchers. After we did the cutting with June, my decision was easy, the flavor and tenderness of the steaks was better than any of the others I tried."

That's just one of many examples of our great partner Sysco Minnesota and Dunn following through on their vision statement: "To be our customers' most valued and trusted business partner."

Next month, we reach the end of the trail on our Farm-to-Fork series with consumer perspective.

HW

