

COMPLIMENTS TO THE CHEF

Certified Hereford Beef® Hybrid Cook-Off revamped.

by **Payton Paschoal**

Judges unanimously described the hybrid Certified Hereford Beef® (CHB) Cook-Off entries as mouthwatering. The CHB Cook-Off provided a unique opportunity for 2022 VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) participants to focus on the beef industry’s final product while honing leadership skills and learning about the breed.

Then and now

This year, contestants prepared their favorite CHB dish in their home kitchens. Prior to 2020, the competition was held at JNHE, and teams would cook CHB cuts in front of judges. With the hybrid event, participants channeled their inner celebrity chef to create an 8-10 minute cooking video.

Filming in their own kitchen allowed contestants to be even more creative with set design, video editing and personal branding. Unlike in years past, where contestants had to choose from one of three CHB cuts, the young chefs could feature any cut in their recipe.

CHB, the National Hereford Women (NHW) and the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) sponsored the event. Judges selected nine award winners from four age divisions. Contestants were required to compete as individuals, but assistants and other family members were allowed

“One can’t go wrong when utilizing Certified Hereford Beef as the main entree for any meal.”

— **Marlena Ballinger**
CHB Cook-Off Judge



to help. Participants were scored based on showmanship, creativity, presentation, knowledge of CHB products and food safety.

“From the trash can nachos to the teres major and ribeye steaks, making a decision on which one was the best was very difficult. I loved how each one of these kids put 110% into creating a cooking show and an amazing dish in the end,” said judge Marlena Ballinger, owner of The Dough Hook Meat Market, Bluffton, Ohio.

Master chefs

Participants not only prepared a CHB-centric dish, but also spoke about their experiences within the breed and beef industry. Junior division participant Nick Jones explained that on his family’s operation they selected Hereford steers for the showring and the meat industry.

Junior members demonstrated their knowledge of CHB through their product use and verbal presentation.



The young chefs were encouraged to emphasize the attributes of the CHB branded beef program.

“It is very apparent they are all going to be future leaders in the industry, along with being passionate promoters of the CHB brand,” said judge Brenyn Burkholder, who is the CHB marketing manager.

This competition was the first time in the kitchen or at the grill for many of the participants. The contest was designed to teach juniors about food safety, including proper equipment handling and the safe temperature to cook each cut of meat.

One participant, Brogan Keltner, Pearl City, Ill., demonstrated safe and efficient preparation techniques. He explained the importance of understanding the cut of meat used because each one is different — such as knowing to cut across the grain when serving cuts like tri-tip.

“I was glad the participants emphasized good food safety practices while they prepared their dishes. The skills they learned in preparation for this contest will benefit them throughout their lives,” Burkholder said.

The contest also helped young people connect the dots between meat science, culinary skills and the cattle industry. Cooper Miller, Newcastle, Wyo., used his ribeye to demonstrate grading aspects, such as marbling and yield. At the end of his cooking video, Miller talked about qualities consumers look for in their steak, such as taste, texture and tenderness.

The hybrid format allowed participants to build their own cooking-show sets. For Devon, Trevor and Braxton Lockhart, Caldwell, Texas, this included a poster with the complete carcass, which they used to identify the location of the cuts used. This visually connected the source to the product for consumers.

Abbeigh Jo Gibson, Deer Park, Ala., transformed her home kitchen into a stunning Hereford-themed set featuring the 2022 JNHE theme, Banners in the Bluegrass. Judges were blown away by her creative presentation.

One of the most unique dishes was a CHB spinach artichoke “meatza” made by Aubrey Lockhart, Somerville, Texas. Lockhart’s protein-filled meat pizza featured a “crust” made of ground CHB topped with garlic, cream cheese, baby bella mushrooms, spinach and seasonings. His tagline “CHB in every bite” earned him second place in the junior division.

While some college students may have a less than nutritious diet, senior division champion and Kansas State University master’s student, Megan Underwood prepared a Kentucky-inspired CHB ribeye complete with a mushroom sauce made with Kentucky’s own Ale 8. She claimed it is easy enough for a college student to make, “And, of course, it screams Banners in the Bluegrass,” Underwood added.

With so many creative and informative CHB cooking videos, judges had quite the task to pick winners. Braxton Lockhart, Caldwell, Texas, topped the peewee division with his trash can nachos. Cooper Miller won the junior division after preparing a T-bone steak and salad. Abbeigh Jo Gibson, Deer Park, Ala., won in the intermediate division with her stacked banners burger. Megan Underwood, Campbellsville, Ky., won the senior division with her Kentucky-style bluegrass steak — a fitting entry for Banners in the Bluegrass.

Where Herefords and families gather

Food does more than just sustain people. Devon Lockhart, second place in the intermediate division, recognizes this when she opened her video by saying, “Welcome to my Southern table, where Herefords and family gather.”

Food preparation and dining are social elements that connect the producer to the consumer. Lockhart’s recipe is traditionally made and shared at JNHE. “My pop and grandma have perfected this recipe of teres major with mashed potatoes, asparagus and a demi glaze,” Lockhart said, “This dish is a great addition to a junior showman’s diet because it is a hearty meal that is easy to make.” Lockhart’s two-ingredient demi glaze is perfect to cook at JNHE.

The judges were impressed by not only the junior members’ cooking skills but also their knowledge of the product. Whether it is from a restaurant, retail or right off the farm, CHB is a quality product consumers can trust. Just ask the junior chefs. **HW**

A TASTE OF THE BLUEGRASS

by Megan Underwood

MUSHROOM ALE 8 SAUCE

4 oz Mushrooms
¼ cup Onion
4 Tablespoons Butter
2 Tablespoons All-Purpose Flour
1 Teaspoon Black Pepper
1 Teaspoon Garlic Powder
2 Tablespoons Beef Broth
1 Cup Ale 8

1. In a skillet on medium heat, combine mushrooms, onion, butter, black pepper, garlic powder and beef broth. Sauté for 5 minutes.
2. Add 2 tablespoons of all-purpose flour and stir.
3. Add 1 cup of Ale 8.
4. Reduce heat and simmer.

CERTIFIED HEREFORD BEEF RIBEYE

2 CHB Ribeye Steaks
Black Peppercorns
Pink Himalayan Salt
½ Tablespoon Extra Virgin Olive Oil
3 Tablespoons Butter

1. Heat skillet to medium heat and place olive oil into the skillet.
2. Season the CHB ribeye steaks with black peppercorns and pink Himalayan salt to your preference.
3. Place ribeye steaks in the skillet and then place butter in the skillet.
4. After 5 minutes, flip the ribeye for a medium doneness.
5. After the next 5 minutes, place ribeye steaks on a plate to rest for 5 minutes.
6. Once the ribeye steaks have rested, top with Mushroom Ale 8 Sauce and serve with your side preferences. **HW**