

## Report on the 2014 GOAL Conference - by Michaela Chalmers

This year the annual Canadian Junior Angus GOAL Conference was held in Calgary, Alberta. It was a huge success with fifty-two juniors in attendance, including two American delegates from the American Junior Angus Association, making it one of the largest conferences to date. There was a lot of fun, a lot of learning and so many great friendships made throughout the course of the weekend.



The fun all began on Saturday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014. After room assignments were distributed the CJAA board led all the juniors in some welcoming ice breakers and we got to know a little bit about the other participants. Right after this we welcomed our first guest speaker, and definitely one of the highlights of the conference, Alvin Law.

Alvin shared with us his “Laws of Life” and his outlook was truly touching. He made a lot of us realize that through adversity it is possible to overcome any obstacle that is placed before you. In Alvin’s case his obstacle was the fact that he was born with no arms. He showed us that life is only what you make of it and that the world belongs to you if you want it to. Many of the participants found it truly amazing to see that Alvin could play the piano, the drums and carry out normal tasks any person with arms does on a regular basis. Alvin’s presentation was a great opener for the conference.

After this the juniors got a chance to have dinner with the Senior Board of Directors for the CAA. This dinner was accompanied by etiquette training from Taylor Hughes and Brenda Rahaus. We were taught the proper way to behave at a five course meal and applied these skills to our dinner. The dinner was followed by the Foundation Legacy Scholarships Panel Discussion where the five scholarship finalists participated in answering questions from CEO Rob Smith. The perspectives of the five youth involved in the discussion were interesting and extremely well presented.



After the seriousness of the evening's events the juniors were called back together to participate in some fun games and social time organized by the CJAA board. The evening's games all surrounded the theme of New Zealand tribes and team challenges incorporating the experience of the Canadian junior teams that attended the World Angus Forum. The highlight was undoubtedly the Haka War Dance performed by some of the young men at the conference.

The next morning speakers included Art Froehlich, President of Agriview Inc. who spoke about "A Global Agriculture Perspective", Matt Bates, Katelyn Detrich and Karla Ness who spoke about their CAA Intern experiences, Dr. Tom Pittman, Senior Instructor of Clinical Skills at U of Calgary on "Working With Your Cattle Vet: From Calving and Beyond" and Stacy Domolewski and Patrick Holland on the WAF youth participation. All of the presentations were engaging and everyone took something new away from them.



The afternoon portion consisted of a visit to Angus Central where the Foundation Legacy Scholarships were awarded to Patrick Holland, Katelyn Detrich and Breanna Anderson. Peter VanStaveren was also awarded three thousand dollars towards the purchase of a heifer from a draw done through the Angus Foundation. All the juniors found Angus Central extremely impressive! We then continued on to our shopping trip at Irvine's Tack and Western Wear and all made some great purchases. After our

shopping adventure we enjoyed an extremely entertaining evening at Jubilation's Dinner Theater. This was followed by a pool party back at the hotel.

The next morning the juniors heard presentations from Michael Hargrave, CJJA President on scholarship opportunities, Fred Taylor, Grading Contractor for Cargill Foods on what the beef industry is demanding, Kim McConnell, Founder and former CEO of AdFarm on youth in agriculture and finally from Austen Anderson, retiring CJJA director on the Cattlemen's Young Leader program.



This was followed by retiring CJAA director's speeches from Katie Wright and Austen Anderson and GOAL evaluation and planning for next year.

The weekend was truly amazing and fun filled. I recommend that all youth involved with Angus or even solely the beef industry participate in GOAL as the information learned is invaluable and will stay with you for the rest of your life.