

Report on the 2012 GOAL Conference - by Callie Gibson



The seventh Canadian Junior Angus Guiding Outstanding Angus Leaders (GOAL) Conference was held February 18-20th in Regina, Saskatchewan at the Ramada Hotel. Thirty six junior members from across Canada, and also four members from the United States, attended this informative conference. The conference is aimed at producing Angus leaders for the future. This year's conference was themed "Winning at the Game". Two Saskatchewan Roughriders joined us as our first speakers on Saturday and gave very inspirational and motivational speeches. The two Riders, Stu Foord and Neal Hughes, both local Regina 'boys' had the message that going for your dreams and working hard can get you anywhere. Stu had just been traded that week to the BC Lions and he was very emotional about leaving Regina. They were enjoyed by all. That evening the Canadian Angus board of directors joined us for a delicious four course meal and a presentation from Heather Salloum from the Lieutenant Governors office on 'Protocol Matters'. She helped participants deal with the array of glassware and utensils that were a part of the dinner, as well as provided tips on greeting people and proper etiquette in formal social situations.



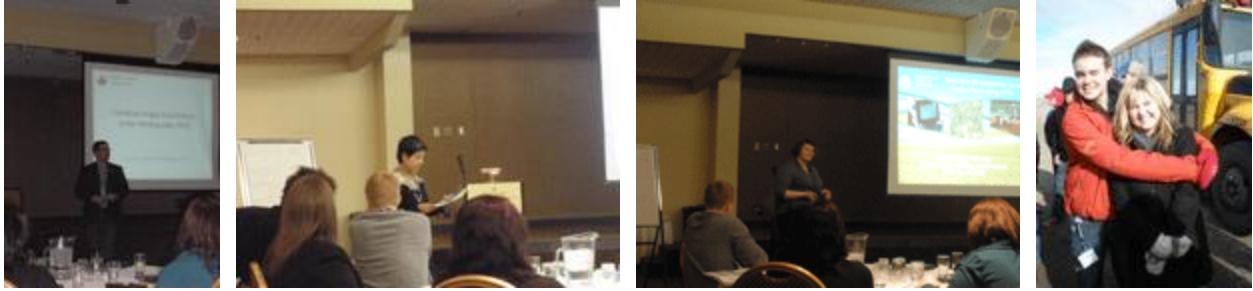
The conference embraced many people who are influences within the Angus industry, but also the cattle industry as a whole. Other speakers included Canadian Angus Association CEO Rob Smith, Junior Ambassador Austen Anderson, General Manager Michael Latimer, and Breed Development Specialist Kajal Devani. Kim McLean from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture and Lee Sinclair of Merial Canada were also presenters at the hotel. All of these speakers were informative but also interesting. This conference enabled junior members to learn about programs which the CAA have set up for the Junior members and Lee and Kim discussed on the importance of genetic testing and EPDs. The presentations all benefitted the juniors who attended the conference.



An exciting part of the conference was being able to tour Optimum Genetics Ltd. outside of Regina on Sunday afternoon. This facility works with producers by drawing semen, implanting embryos and doing genetic work. The tour was a great experience for all the juniors who were involved. As well as getting to learn about Optimum Genetics Ltd., juniors were introduced to ultrasound and got to see an ultrasound demonstration by Rod Wendorf as well as try their hand at scanning an animal. On this tour juniors also learned about nutrition in a presentation from Janie Jensen of Masterfeeds. This tour of Optimum was a great experience for junior members and it allowed many questions to be asked.



The GOAL conference is an incredible experience for junior members who want to get to know more about the breed they love. Participating in the conference helps junior gain knowledge about multiple aspects of the industry. The newly gained knowledge juniors receive is what will help juniors make a difference to the breed and also to the cattle industry in the future. Along with newfound knowledge, you also make many new contacts. The Conference was held alongside Canadian Angus Association board meetings which made it possible for juniors to interact with CAA directors. Creating new friendships and new contacts through the GOAL Conference is a wonderful part of the weekend's events. Along with the knowledge and friendships that you gain, you also have an incredible time. This year a highlight of the conference was an amazing dinner theatre event Sunday night at Applause Dinner Theatre. The GOAL Conference delegates were front and center at the show, and with few other people in attendance, members were singled out to 'help' with the entertainment – a great time was held by all!



To wrap up the conference Monday morning CJAA directors put on informative and entertaining workshops on the Certified Angus Beef program, applying knowledge from the EPD presentations to 'choose' the correct bull(s) for specific programs and on opportunities available to Juniors such as exchange trips to the US, scholarships and the National Junior Angus Showdown. Retiring CJAA board members then spoke about their experiences as directors, which also became very emotional for them, and many of the members in attendance. They encouraged members to consider running for the board as it is a wonderful way to expand as a person, as well as give back to the organization that has provided each of them with great opportunities and experiences.



I would highly recommend GOAL Conference to any juniors who are keen on the Angus breed and who want to make a difference in the cattle industry in the future. I would also like to thank that CJAA board and Belinda Wagner, CJA Coordinator for putting on such a memorable event. I hope to see everyone at GOAL Conference 2013 in Edmonton!!