

## GOAL Report 2015

By: Jennifer Jermey

GOAL Conference 2015 was held between February 14th and 16th in Guelph, Ontario. The event was, once again, a huge success with 60 junior participants, including eighty guests from the National Junior Angus Association. There was a large range of participants that represented all of Canada and the different aspects of the Angus breed. The event began Saturday afternoon with icebreakers provided by the CJAA directors that allowed us to introduce ourselves to the other members in attendance, as well as giving us a great way to learn each other's names.

Our first speaker was Jim "Basketball" Jones, who provided an interesting and energetic approach to positive thinking and overcoming adversity. He encouraged us to "BEEF up our Future," or "Be Positive, Envision the Future, Encourage Others, Finish; Take Action". He performed basketball tricks while sharing his personal challenges with dyslexia and trouble with reading in school, which he was able to overcome with hard work and dedication. He encouraged us to be kind to each other and to break down hard tasks and challenges in our lives into, smaller, more manageable pieces.



Kristy Stevenson then presented "Social Media Tools and How to Use Them," a talk that encouraged the development of branding online and a discussion on how best to approach different social media sites. She strongly recommended having a website and making sure all social media sites are connected so that consumers can easily find your products on different websites. Dr. Rob Swackhammer, of Swackhammer Vet Services, presented a discussion on "Herd Health in Beef Cattle," and was able to answer individuals' questions and open discussions on the future of herd health.

That evening's formal dinner was a great chance to meet and talk with other Junior Members, especially the American guests who were assigned to the different tables, about the different ways their breed

organizations are run and the events they take part in each year. The Legacy Scholarship panel discussion was held after dinner, with the five finalists answering questions posed by CEO Rob Smith and CJAA members in attendance. The questions, related to the Angus breed and our changing world, were answered by the five finalists. Following the panel, the CJAA Board of Directors had us participate in Minute-to-Win-It games that provided a chance to test our skills, including sorting Smarties by color and knocking cups off of tables using balloons. Congratulations to the overall winner, Denver Bolton, who received a signed basketball from Jim "Basketball" Jones and much-prized bragging rights.

Sunday morning started with breakfast and was followed by "Building Public Trust in Canadian Food and Farming" by Crystal Mackay, from Farm and Food Care Ontario, who talked about how the public's view on food is extremely important and that the projects run by Farm and Food Care are helping to connect consumers with Canadian farms. Kristen Kelderman, also from Farm and Food Care Ontario, discussed agriculture-related topics with us, had us develop our own elevator speeches (a 30 second short speech about who you are and what you are trying to achieve), and provided some great tips and guidelines when opening a discussion about agriculture with the public. After lunch the McArther family of Heatherlea Farm Market, shared their personal story of starting a farmer's market out of their house and their strategies for building a small business. They shared how they expanded their company from a few chest freezers in their house to having a large separate retail business. They were happy to answer questions and to share the challenges they encountered while building their business. Next, Cory Van Groningen, from VG Meats, talked about his butchershop, his operation, and the products he is providing to his consumers. He shared how he was able to connect with his consumers using a Smartphone app, as well as the system he uses to provide the products requested.

After Cory's presentation, some of the participants braved the -40°C weather to visit the University of Guelph and view the plaque dedicated to the first Angus animal born in Canada. After our brisk walk, we were given the chance to warm up and listen to Geof Bednar from Certified Angus Beef, talk about the history and standards behind their program. We were given the cost analysis of cutting steaks in house versus buying pre-cut steaks and a couple of junior members were able to 'cut' and trim a strip loin into steaks.

Supper's entertainment came from Dufflebag Theatre as they did a comedic version of Macbeth, which relied heavily on audience participation and was very entertaining. Rob Smith then had us break into smaller groups and answer questions that pertained to the Canadian Junior Angus and Canadian Angus Association's and what we thought was working well, and what could be changed for the better. Finally, the moment we were all waiting for, and the winners of the Legacy Scholarships and the Heifer Draw were announced. Matt Bates received first place, Michaela Chalmers second, Jennifer Jerney third and Allison Speller and Tyler Dietrich were the runners up on the Legacy Scholarships and Breanna Anderson won the Heifer voucher. After the announcements, the CJAA directors provided "Don't Forget the Lyrics", where we learned that some of our members really could sing, some couldn't, and that our American guests did not know the lyrics to O Canada, however we surprised and pleased them by knowing the lyrics to their national anthem, likely due to a lot of 'hockey night in Canada'!



After breakfast the next morning, Dr. Tim Henshaw walked us through the estrus cycle of a cow and showed us of some secondary signs of heat that we should be aware of. Brittney Livingston, from BIO, talked about their genetic evaluations that are quite similar to our EPD's but can be applied to commercial herds and cattle.

Karla Ness and Stacy Domolewski talked about all of the scholarship and trip bursaries available to Canadian Junior Angus members. Matt Bates, the Junior Ambassador, talked about his time and experience as the ambassador and answered questions about the experience before encouraging all of us to apply. Finally, there were four emotional goodbye speeches presented by the four outgoing CJAA directors as they shared their experiences on the board and how those experiences changed their lives.

Goal 2015 was a wonderful experience and I strongly encourage everyone to attend next year. It lived up to its name as the "Power of the Past, Force of the Future". I learned a lot, but more importantly, I was given the chance to reconnect with old friends and the opportunity to meet new ones! A big thank you to all the speakers, CJAA Directors, volunteers and Belinda Wagner for a tremendous and informative weekend!

