

## History of the *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> brand

Back in 1975, an Angus rancher from Marshallville, Ohio, named Harold Etling was out to dinner. He was excited to order a steak advertised as “Angus” on the menu, as he knew this breed of beef cattle – *his* breed – could deliver a great eating experience.

After a few disappointing bites, however, he knew there had to be a better way to give consumers an indication of beef’s quality: its tenderness, its juiciness, and most of all, its remarkable flavor. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) grades could tell part of the story, but in the 1970s, they had recently been redefined to reflect a focus on the leanness of meat. But as any beef aficionado knows, the greatest factor in beef’s flavor and quality is the amount of marbling, the little flecks of fat within the cut that melt during cooking.

### A shared vision of quality

Etling reached out to some like-minded cattlemen, who also wanted to help market quality Angus beef to consumers who would recognize and appreciate its benefits. But beef was then a commodity product, so they had to create a brand, as well as a system to ensure its quality, consistency and integrity at every point along the way.

The result of their efforts, in conjunction with the American Angus Association<sup>®</sup>, was the *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> brand, the world’s first brand of beef. The flavor forefathers looked to Dr. Bobby D. VanStavern, a meat scientist with The Ohio State University, to develop the brand’s signature quality specifications: the checklist of the characteristics Angus beef must meet to earn the brand name.

Beef would be evaluated against these standards after harvest by USDA graders. This unbiased, third-party approval ensures objectivity and the integrity of the brand name. Simply put, if beef doesn’t meet all of the brand’s standards, it can’t earn the label. (Angus beef not meeting *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> brand standards may be marketed as another label or brand of “Angus beef.”)

### Delivering value to farmers, businesses and consumers

The first pound of *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> brand product was sold Oct. 18, 1978, at Renzetti’s IGA in Columbus, Ohio. Forty years and more than 15 billion pounds later, the result of that fateful steak dinner has sustained thousands of family farmers who realize higher prices for their cattle as the result of increased demand for high-quality Angus beef driven by consumer recognition of the brand.

The *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> brand has also fueled the growth of thousands of other partners, including distributors, meat packers and processors, restaurants and markets, who count on the brand’s quality to boost their business and keep customers returning again and again.



## Notable milestones

**1979** – The first distributor, Oxford Trading Co. of Westwood, Mass., began delivering *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> brand products to Northeast retail stores and restaurants.

**1980** – The first restaurant, Maple Root Inn, in Coventry, R.I., featured the brand on its menu, helping push broader recognition and demand, and annual sales of a notable 1 million pounds.

**1982** – DeBragga & Spitler, New York, N.Y., was the first distributor dedicated to offering restaurants a direct source of *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> brand products.

**1985** – The first *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> brand deli meat, corned beef, was introduced.

**1988** – The brand welcomed its first international chain of restaurants: New Tokyo in Japan.

**1993** – *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> brand ground beef made its debut.

**1997** – Brand partners marketed, on average, more than 1 million pounds each business day.

**2001** – The new *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> brand Prime brand extension raised the bar even higher on the brand's signature standards, offering a super-premium option for exclusive restaurants and high-end grocery service meat counters.

**2002** – As a supplier of the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, Utah, the brand served more than 1.5 million pounds of beef and claimed an even higher profile on the world stage.

**2004** – Appealing to consumers who prefer naturally raised beef, *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> brand Natural was introduced: product from cattle that have never received antibiotics or added hormones, and fed grass and grain.

**2010** – Beef lovers across the United States gained the opportunity to purchase premium steaks direct at [CertifiedAngusBeef.com](http://CertifiedAngusBeef.com).

**2012** – The *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> Culinary Center, an 8,000-square-foot facility offering interactive, fully immersive trainings and ideation programs for brand partners, opened on the Wooster, Ohio, campus.

**2015** – The brand's free Roast Perfect smartphone app helps families gain confidence in choosing and preparing the perfect beef roast, on holidays and every day.

**2016** – With ranchers responding to ever-rising consumer demand, more cattle meeting the brand's exacting standards leads to record consumer purchases of more than 1 billion pounds for the year.

**2018** – To celebrate its 40th anniversary and ranching heritage, 40 barns in rural communities across the country are being painted with the brand's logo. Follow the journey: #BrandtheBarn.

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