

## Gate To Plate - Press Release

Our great state of Iowa is surrounded by beautiful countryside, flourishing cities, cornfields, and of course livestock. However, there is one big thing that we are forgetting. Technology. Our state and especially our world is surrounded by technology, more specifically it's surrounded by social media. Through the lens of our phones, we can capture so much beauty. Certain individuals excel in that field. They are called social media influencers. Recently we invited several food and lifestyle bloggers to attend a Gate to Plate tour with us. Through this experience, they were able to capture the beauty of Iowa beef.

What are social media influencers? They are individuals with expertise and knowledge in a certain topic and have a decent online following. The people that follow influencers view them as trustworthy sources of information and because of this influencers have the power to affect the purchasing decision of others. Even if an influencer gives out a small recommendation to a certain brand, it can help expand and grow that brand even more.

Over the past couple of years and even the past decade, social media has drastically grown in significance. A recent study even explains that more than 3.4 billion people actively use social media which is 45% of the world's population. With so many people engaging with social media, influencers have become an essential and almost vital marketing tool. This is precisely why the Iowa Beef Checkoff is utilizing this tool to drive beef demand.

The group of women that joined us on our Gate to Plate tour were food and lifestyle influencers from Iowa. These talented individuals are a trusted source of information for thousands of people and they help spread positive messages about Iowa farmers and the food they raise and/or grow.

Our goal for this event was to create a fun educational opportunity to provide these Iowa food social media influencers with the newest up-to-date beef nutrition information, beef culinary practices, and beef production knowledge through hands-on learning experiences. This two-day Gate to Plate tour did just that, for it included:

- Educational Beef and Wine Pairing Presentation
- Beef Styling Demonstration with Main Dish Media
- Farm Tour at Rowe's Red Cows

The exclusive event began on the evening of June 14th at Johnny's Steakhouse in Des Moines. Here influencers were served a four-course meal showcasing beef. Each beef course was perfectly paired with a distinct glass of wine. Certain wines paired with certain cuts of beef can bring out the savory taste of both the beef and the wine. They got to learn firsthand through this presentation what these specific wines were that worked best with certain cuts of beef.

The following day started with a beef styling presentation led by Main Dish Media. Main Dish Media is a company that specializes in food styling. They create beautiful dishes that can be used for photography, videography, advertisements, and more. Our bloggers got to learn tips and tricks on how to best style beef to best gain positive attention of consumers and viewers. They even got to put their newly learned skills to the test, for they all got to style a burger.

The last stop of the day was down on the farm. Our influencers got a personal farm tour at Rowe's Red Cows. This fifth-generation family farm located in Dallas Center raises Red Angus cattle and has its very own meat market where they sell their own beef. Here the food bloggers got to see firsthand where their food comes from and how it was raised. We were able to answer any and all their questions and educate them on beef production practices.

Each food social media influencer left with their hands full of delicious Iowa-raised beef and excitedly awaited to cook with it when they got home. Most importantly they were eager to share with their followers. We are confident that these Social Media Influencers are now equipped to provide content that supports beef checkoff campaigns and promote beef efficiently and effectively. Content that also reaches large audiences and has the power to inspire its viewers to choose beef. Most importantly, Iowa beef.

As a producer, you already know the beauty of beef. You are surrounded by it every day. You see the beauty of it every morning and every night. Showing Social Media Influencers the beauty of it firsthand through this Gate to Plate tour opened doors of opportunities. Because now they too can advocate for beef. Share the beauty that producers see every day with their large following. Partnering with Social Media Influencers is the next big step in the hope that we all one day can see the beauty in beef.

If you're interested in learning more about the effectiveness of Social Media Influencers within the beef industry, feel free to check out this website:

<https://www.beefboard.org/2022/04/25/the-power-of-influencers/>