

# They Serve Up Steaks For Troops

The best cut of beef for the best of the best. That's the philosophy of the All American Beef Battalion (AABB), which has served more than 100,000 rib eye steak dinners to U.S. military troops and their families since 2008.

The idea for the 501(c) nonprofit organization was cooked up by Bill Broadie, a fourth generation cattleman and Vietnam Marine veteran who earned two Purple Hearts – one for losing a leg. His generation of soldiers returned home to hostile attitudes. He wanted a better welcome for this generation of soldiers, to show them that America cares and its citizens are grateful. The Kansas cattleman decided a simple way to do that was to feed them a good meal.

"We don't consider this a charity," says Jon Fort, senior vice chair with the AABB. "We consider ourselves just good Americans." He and other volunteers have stoked up smokers on 122-degree days and traveled through 17 in. of snow to serve service men and women a steak dinner before they deployed to Iraq. The volunteer cooks have also been there to welcome troops back home and for other special family events. Altogether, they have served meals in 21 states to groups of 110 to 5,000 people.

"We have been surprised that some people have never had a good quality rib eye steak," Fort says, adding that the meals are also a way to promote beef. "We use plastic forks and knives, and it amazes people how tender the

steaks are."

Volunteers cook as many as 640 steaks at a time in large Southern Pride rotisserie smokers. The 1 to 1 1/2-in. thick aged steaks are coated with a dry rub and hickory smoked. Hot steaks are packed in special coolers where they continue to cook and stay warm until they are served with cheesy hash browns, corn, and rolls.

Early on, Broadie teamed up with members of the cattle industry, local bankers and state senators. President George Bush endorsed the idea, and the group earned 501(c) status in record time. Individual donations keep the group going. Some donate rib eye steaks; others, like one 4-H'er, donate the money they earn from selling cattle. One Charolais heifer at an Oklahoma sale barn was auctioned and resold several times to raise \$26,000 for AABB. Others donate their time, such as college students who pitch in when volunteers are needed.

Other than mileage and room reimbursement, none of the volunteers are paid, Fort says. To be more efficient and keep travel costs down, AABB would like to work with groups in other parts of the country to provide the meals locally. They currently have groups in Kansas and Texas.

Fort invites anyone interested in donating to the organization or starting a group to contact AABB.

Cooking a meal – even when it's more than 100 degrees – is a small sacrifice compared



to what the soldiers endure, Fort says. Volunteers continue to do it, because they can shake the hands of soldiers and witness their gratitude for a good meal and citizens who care about them.

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**All American Beef Battalion, is a nonprofit organization that has served more than 100,000 rib eye steak dinners to U.S. military troops and their families since 2008.**

# Haitians Give Thumbs Up To Grain Bin Homes

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

One Iowa grain farmer's idea for helping homeless Haitians after the devastating earthquake in 2010 has resulted in a coalition of ag businesses and citizens united to provide a common sense solution to the need for low cost housing. At the heart of the plan is Safe T Homes – modified grain bins turned into mini homes by Sukup Manufacturing Co. of Sheffield, Iowa.

"People ask me, 'Aren't they hot?'" says Ken DeYoung, who created the Global Compassion Network based out of his hometown, Laurens, Iowa. "It's the design that makes it work. The double roof is the key. And there's ventilation as well. It's 8 to 10 degrees cooler inside."

Organized just last fall, GCN has partnered with the Iowa Soybean Association's Food and Family Project ([www.iowafoodandfamily.com](http://www.iowafoodandfamily.com)) to launch "Special Delivery. Homes. Help. Hope. For Haiti." The goal of the campaign, which runs through June 1, 2012, is to set up 48 of the homes at the Village of Hope, 10 acres of land that DeYoung purchased in Haiti after months of fighting through government red tape.

With the support of campaign co-chairs, Iowa Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds and Iowa Ag Secretary Bill Northey as well as farm groups, businesses and individuals, DeYoung expects to exceed his goal. Thirteen homes have already been shipped and set up.

"The response from the Haitians to the design was pretty exciting," DeYoung says. He explains that Haitians live in concrete block homes with cement roofs, which were deadly during the earthquake. The people who survived are now afraid to go into concrete structures.

DeYoung says Haitians eagerly joined Americans who flew to Haiti earlier this year to assemble the new homes – 11 structures in 5 1/2 days. On the last day the Haitians built a home by themselves.

Each home comes with a 1/2-in. open-end wrench, a speed wrench and punches to line up holes – the only tools needed for assembly.

Making it simple to erect and easy to transport were the goals of Brett Nelson and his design team at Sukup. Nelson had been thinking about the design, and then got permission from the company's owners to work on it after the earthquake.

"It's an engineered system that draws on our experience making grain bins," Nelson explains. "It's very durable and it's fireproof, nearly earthquake-proof and anchored to withstand wind. It's also termite proof and cool."

The 20-gauge steel, 18-ft. wide by 13.5-ft. tall structures weigh less than 3,500 lbs., with the longest roof sections at 9 1/2 ft. so they can easily be transported by hand or on carts. They include two windows and a door. The lip at the edge of the first layer of the 24-gauge steel roof is turned up to help channel water for collection under the eave. The top heat shield layer is made of perforated steel that shades the roof. The double roof combined with a cupola and continuous ventilation under the eave, keeps the unit cooler than outside.

"This shelter is suitable for all phases of recovery," Nelson says. "It can be deployed quickly, but is durable enough for transitional or permanent shelter."

Cost per Safe T Home is \$5,700. With another \$1,000 for shipping and a concrete slab, the units have a 70-year life expectancy.

The partnership with Sukup is just one of many.

The Iowa Soybean Association pledged \$1,000 per Safe T Home (up to \$48,000) to purchase Meals from the Heartland – food packets of soy protein, rice, vitamin powder and dried vegetables to feed six. Cargill-Iowa Region is also donating meals.

County Farm Bureau groups, FFA clubs and other organizations have rallied around the "Special Delivery" that Iowans plan to make to Haiti through GCN.

DeYoung says the Village of Hope is transitional to get families back on their feet, provide education and opportunities for future sustainability.



**Safe T Homes are modified grain bins turned into mini homes. They're being built for Haitians left homeless after a devastating earthquake in 2010.**

"It's not a free ride for them," DeYoung says. They will sign contracts and be expected to help with the village and pay rent to hopefully make the village self-sustaining. He hopes to build larger, 48-ft. dia. Safe T Homes to set up as a clinic and community center/church. Donations of a tractor and grinder for rice will make it easier to grow and process food.

"We don't plan to shut down after June 1," DeYoung says. The need is great, and another community has offered land to set up a similar village.

People can help by contributing money, goods or by volunteering their skills by going to Haiti.

"I want to get as many people down there as I can," DeYoung says.

He is a pilot and flies his plane on many trips to Haiti delivering medical and other

supplies. Early on, he worked with others welding and fabricating shipping containers into an orphanage, which was frustrating work in a country where there's no acetylene gas and few tools that most people take for granted.

The simplicity and durability of Safe T Homes make them a great housing option.

"My heart and my faith tell me I have a responsibility to work to take care of the orphans and widows of the world," DeYoung says.

He invites anyone with the same belief to support GCN to help with its Special Delivery project.

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