

BIF Honors McClaren, 44 Farms

Texas ranch honored as Outstanding Seedstock Producer of the Year in Calgary, Canada.

by Sarah Kocher, American Angus Association

When Bob McClaren took over his grandfather's cattle operation, he had one goal: to make sure commercial cattlemen could experience more success. Unexpectedly, this would also lead him and 44 Farms down a path to rapid expansion of their seedstock operation and the launch of Prime Pursuits as a venture to supply customers at Walmart and those in foodservice with the high-quality, Angus beef.

The upward spiral now continues as the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) recognized 44 Farms as the 2023 Outstanding Seedstock Producer of the Year during its annual symposium in July 2023.

The Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association supported 44 Farms' nomination.

"44 Farms is not only driven to be successful in their own operations, but also to empower ranchers with the right genetics, data and tools to feed America," the nomination stated. "McClaren and 44 Farms is keen on using data to maintain herd health, track what their customers are purchasing, and observe their regional footprint," it continued. "Through the Genetic and Economic Management (GEM) and Prime Intelligence (PI), 44 Farms correlates cattle purchases made with their future breeding decisions, to deliver those needs and wants of their customers. Bob focuses on the growth and success of the



PHOTO BY TADD MYERS, COURTESY OF AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION.

Callers take bids at the fall bull sale in 2022 for 44 Farms in Cameron, Texas.

beef industry reaching far outside Cameron, Texas."

McClaren and his team talk about the value of data in his operation and for the industry. As they work with other producers, they try to share data on an individual basis.

"Often as we get more information and improve the traceability of all this, we want to know even more," McClaren says. "Our mission is to help producers achieve and sustain success through tailored solutions that meet their specific goals."

The 44 Farms business model does not shy away from relationships or hands-on work. McClaren's network spans to reach more than 1,200

producers, almost 600 Walmart stores across the southeastern United States and more than 650 foodservice operations.

"Bob's vision, dedication and leadership led to the development of Prime Pursuits, with which Walmart is proud to partner," says Doug McMillon, president and CEO of Walmart. "Prime Pursuits supports ranchers, too, by creating jobs and maintaining steady demand and stability in the marketplace. They have focused on crafting their genetic selection to produce bulls that sire the type of product that consumers want and have done so cost-effectively."

McClaren says he enjoys the relationships he builds through his work and seeing others succeed.

“That’s what really makes the business so exciting and so fun to be involved in,” he says. “It’s to see Walmart being successful; seeing our foodservice customers being successful; and then most importantly, the Walmart customer enjoying Angus beef.”

The Outstanding Seedstock Producer of the Year award was selected based on several criteria. The BIF selection committee included operational goals, record systems and implementation; their breeding programs, selection objectives, marketing, carcass merit, forage resources and stewardship; innovations and improvements; and how nominees have contributed to

their community and the larger beef industry in their judging criteria.

McClaren says it’s a compliment when people are interested in the stories behind 44 Farms.

“Our genetics program is the foundation of our business,” McClaren says. “It’s the story of our business and the history.”

Looking to the future, McClaren’s next goal is to have each package of McClaren Farms beef include the story of the ranch that produced the beef.

“There are always ways to get

better,” he says. “It’s also our hope to help producers improve their programs in order that they can thrive.” **AJ**



PHOTO BY BEEF IMPROVEMENT FEDERATION, COURTESY OF AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION.

From left, Joe Epperly, 2023 president of the Beef Improvement Federation; Tracy Woods, 44 Farms chief genetics officer; Bob McClaren, 44 Farms owner; and Jarrod Payne, 44 Farms director of cattle operations, after accepting the 2023 Outstanding Seedstock Producer of the Year award.

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