

BIF Commercial Elite

The Beef Improvement Federation announces nominees for
2012 Commercial Producer of the Year.

Each year, the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) recognizes commercial herds nominated by supporting organizations for the BIF Commercial Producer of the Year award. All nominees are recognized during an awards luncheon hosted during the BIF research symposium and annual meeting. This year's event — sponsored by Texas A&M University and hosted by the American Brahman Breeders Association (ABBA) — was scheduled for April 18-21 in Houston, Texas. The overall winner was yet to be named as of this publication.

Here are the nominees:

Carswell-Nichols Herefords

**Owners/Managers: Jim and Carol Nichols, Brock and Carolyn Nichols
Alton, Kan.**

Carswell-Nichols Hereford Ranch is a livestock and grain operation located in north central Kansas near Alton. Harold Carswell, founder of the ranch, started the cow herd in 1935 with his first 4-H heifer. Since then, the operation has grown to include his daughter, Carol Nichols; son-in-law, Jim Nichols; two grandsons, Brock and Ryan; granddaughter-in-law, Carolyn; four great-grandchildren; and 300 head of Hereford and Angus cattle.

Hereford cattle are the heart of the operation and remain the family's true passion. Their philosophy is that Hereford cattle continue to be the benchmark against which other breeds are measured as cattlemen continue to seek optimum traits inherent in Herefords. Those traits, critical to survival in the cattle business, are exactly the same traits Carswell-Nichols Herefords offers their customers in today's industry: fertility, reproductive performance, feed efficiency, optimum size and growth and documented feedlot and carcass superiority. They believe in combining superior genetics, progressive management and industry partnerships to provide consumers a quality beef product and reputable breeding stock.

Today, the Carswell-Nichols cow

herd consists of one-third registered cows and two-thirds commercial. The family raises 1,750 acres of wheat and 2,000 acres of fall crops that consist of corn, milo, soybeans, silage feed and cane hay. Cows are managed on 3,000 acres of native grass pasture.

Joining Jim and Carol at the ranch is son Brock; his wife, Carolyn; and their four children. Son Ryan is a banker in Wichita, working in agri-finance, and is a huge influence in their marketing and keeping up-to-date on resources. Ryan also helps in the advertisement and marketing of the registered and commercial herds.

The headquarters of their operation have been at the current location, the home of Jim and Carol, previously home to Harold and Pat, since 1950.

The Kansas Livestock Association (KLA) nominated Carswell-Nichols Herefords.

Five Dot Ranch

**Owners/Managers: Todd and Loretta Swickard
Standish, Calif.**

The Swickard family has been ranching in California since 1852. Originally from San Jose, Jack and Midge Swickard moved to Lassen County with 200 registered Herefords where they started Five Dot Land & Cattle Co. in 1959. The herd size of their western range operation grew tremendously and shifted to a primarily Angus herd.

In 1994, Todd Swickard took over the daily management of the ranch, changing the operation to an all-natural program with a stronger focus on environmental stewardship. These changes allowed Todd and his wife, Loretta, to start their all-natural, locally grown branded beef business in 2006. The goal of their newly developed program was to produce and market a specialized beef product directly to the consumer, while maintaining the functionality of the ranch in the changing economy.

On the cattle side they employ artificial insemination (AI) and embryo transfer (ET), along with traditional range bulls to breed cattle that fit their environment and marketing needs. They take extensive measures to evaluate their progress. Equally important is improving the

lands they graze, which are scattered over six counties from the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the grazing lands near the San Francisco Bay area.

In California, threatened and endangered species are the norm, not the exception, on all of the lands on which the Swickards raise beef cattle. With the seventh generation now being integrated into the company, Five Dot Ranch has the room and potential to grow.

The California Beef Cattle Improvement Association (BCIA) nominated Five Dot Ranch.

Glenmary Farm

**Owners/Managers: Tom and Kim Nixon
Rapidan, Va.**

Tom and Kim Nixon of Rapidan, Va., own and operate Glenmary Farm LLC, a 3,500-acre cattle operation along the Rapidan River. Glenmary Farm is a diverse operation focused on 750 commercial fall- and spring-calving beef cows, and custom cattle-feeding facilities. The farm is also home to the Virginia BCIA Culpeper Bull Test. Supporting the operation is 1,800 acres of cropland and 2,500 acres of pasture and hay land.

A rotational crossbreeding system utilizing Angus, Charolais, SimAngus and Gelbvieh Balancer genetics is implemented for the cow herd. Proven, high-accuracy bulls are utilized through AI, and high-quality natural-service sires are acquired through the state bull test program. The calf crop is marketed in several ways, with the majority sold as weaned, value-added feeder cattle in load lots in conjunction with other progressive producers in the region.

Glenmary Farm calves have established a strong, quality reputation among cattle feeders in the eastern Corn Belt, as well as in the Midwest. Additionally, both fall- and spring-calving commercial bred heifers are developed and sold.

The confinement cattle-finishing facility provides further flexibility in the marketing of calves. They have the capacity to finish 1,600 homegrown and custom cattle annually. The Nixons utilize extensive production and financial records to guide short- and long-term business decisions that affect the livelihood of the family operation and their five full-time employees.

Numerous awards have been presented

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to the Nixons through the years. Tom and Kim have been recognized by Virginia Farm Bureau as Young Farmer of the Year. The Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District recognized them as Conservation Farm of the Year. They also received the 2005 BCIA Superior Service Award.

Tom is very active in the local Central Virginia Cattlemen's Association, serving as a founding board member and three years as president. Additionally, Tom has been a director for the Virginia Cattlemen's Association and for the Orange County Farm Bureau. Kim has served as an associate director for the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District and is a volunteer leader for 4-H. Tom and Kim have a daughter, Elizabeth, and a son, Robert. Both are actively involved in 4-H livestock projects, judging programs, FFA activities and the farming operation.

Glenmary Farm is nominated by the Virginia BCIA.

H&T Bies Cattle Co.

Owners/Managers: Harold and Judy Bies, Travis and Deanna Bies, Donna and Dean Klapperich
Rapid City, S.D.

Nestled near the Black Hills of western South Dakota, the operation's 1,100 head of Limousin-Angus-cross cows graze on both deeded land and Forest Service land. H&T is a true Bies family operation. The partnership consists of Harold and wife Judy, son Travis and wife Deanna, as well as Harold and Judy's daughter, Donna, and her husband, Dean Klapperich.

Consistent, proven genetics from top Limousin herds have allowed H&T to pursue the all-natural niche market. Through careful genetic selection for high maternal and growth expected progeny differences (EPDs), H&T is still able to wean a heavy calf in late September without the use of growth implants. By following the strict all-natural protocol, this provides them access to specific, value-added markets. Cows are calved in open pastures and they retain their own replacements, so an emphasis is put on maternal characteristics and calving ease.

H&T understands the value of information at marketing time. They rigorously document their cow herd's genetic and health records. They also age- and source-verify their calves each year using IMI Global's verification system. In addition, H&T is certified for the Non-Hormone Treated Cattle market (NHTC), qualifying their cattle to sell into the European Union (EU). Selling their calves

with this verified information has enabled them to receive premiums.

They also participate in the Global Animal Partnership (GAP) program. H&T's commitment to information and an extensive individual identification system have allowed them to assess their cow herd in a more intensive manner.

The North American Limousin Foundation (NALF) nominated H&T Bies Cattle Co.

Jones Bros. Farm

Owners/Managers: Crawford and Cooper Jones
Prattville, Ala.

Jones Bros. Farm, owned and operated by Crawford and Cooper Jones, is located in Autauga County, Ala. The operation includes beef cattle, cotton, small grains and hay production, and consists of approximately 3,500 acres of both owned and leased land. They are currently leasing Twin Valley Farms from Ron Henderson.

Jones Bros. Farm began in 2000 with the purchase of 11 open replacement heifers from the Chilton County BCIA Heifer Sale. It has grown to 300 breeding females, with a goal of aggressive growth to 400 females by 2014. The cow herd consists of a three-way cross of Simmental, Chiangus and Brangus cattle. A 75-day fall calving season, from Oct. 1 to Dec. 15, is planned to capture market advantage for feeder cattle in a cooperative teleauction each August. In 2010, 72% of the calf crop was born in the first 30 days of the calving season. The herd has been honored for ranking in the top three herds within the Alabama BCIA large-herd division for the past three years and has produced Alabama BCIA Gold Star Dams for the past six years.

Performance-minded cattle production is in the genomics of the Jones Bros. Their grandfather, Ed Wadsworth, was a charter member and served as the first president of Alabama BCIA in 1964. They were further supported by their mother, Carol Wadsworth Pearson, who gave them their first pastureland to begin their cow herd from the original Wadsworth Bros. Farm. Expressing their performance genetics and applying 21st century savvy business skills, these young cattlemen are building toward the future.

The Alabama BCIA nominated Jones Bros. Farm.

Kempfer Cattle Co.

Owners: Billy and Reed Kempfer Families
Saint Cloud, Fla.

Kempfer Cattle Co. (KCC) is a 25,000-

acre, family-owned-and-operated ranch located in Deer Park, Fla. They have been in business there since 1898; the sixth generation is now starting to help work the ranch. KCC is a commercial cow-calf and seedstock operation. The commercial operation consists of a three-way cross of Brahman, Angus and traditional Shorthorns. Charolais bulls are used for a terminal cross on less-productive Angus- and Shorthorn-sired cows.

Their calving season is November through January, with 85%-90% being born in the first 60 days. The majority of calves born in the last 30 days are from second-calf heifers. They manage 2,500 mama cows and 750 replacement heifers. Their business has made a shift during the past five years to raising and selling quality replacement heifers. High fertility and fleshing ability, along with balanced growth and carcass traits have brought great demand in recent years.

The Kempfers started their seedstock business in 1978 raising purebred Brahmans. Their primary goal has always been to raise bulls for their commercial herd, but demand has enabled them to market bulls to other registered and commercial breeders throughout the southern United States. They have participated in a number of sire evaluation projects during the past 20 years. Most are done in cooperation with feedlots, primarily Decatur County, Kan., University of Florida, and the American Brahman Breeders Association (ABBA). This, combined with retaining ownership on many of their commercial calves, is a great tool in helping them move their herd in the right direction.

Kempfer Cattle Co. is nominated by the ABBA.

Maddux Cattle Co.

Owners/Managers: Jack and John Maddux
Wauneta, Neb.

Maddux Cattle Co. is a cow-calf and yearling cattle operation located in southwest Nebraska. Taylor and Clara Maddux homesteaded the ranch in 1886, 11 miles north of Wauneta on the Stinking Water Creek. The ranch has grown today to encompass 40,000 acres of owned and leased land that sustains 2,500 mother cows and 5,000 yearlings.

Native range consists of sandhills and hard land canyons that are part of the watersheds of three creeks that run through the ranch. The operation has approximately 1,800 irrigated and 600 dryland farming acres, the balance being native grass, some

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of which is subirrigated meadows. Jack and John Maddux, the third- and fourth-generation owner/operators of the ranch, manage the operation.

Replacement heifers and cows are bred to calve in April and May. Cow-calf pairs summer on native range, calves are weaned in the early fall, and wintered in backgrounding facilities or winter-grazed with supplementation of distillers' wet grains. All calves, with the exception of home-raised replacement heifers and bulls, go to leased grass in the spring. Steers and heifers are marketed off grass each August as 900-pound (lb.) yearlings.

After weaning, cows are winter-grazed on leased cornstalks from November through mid-March. Cows are then driven back home to native range roughly one month before calving. In this system, the Maddux cow herd has a full 12-month grazing system with no hay or supplement

fed to the mature cow herd. Some strategic protein supplementation is used for first-calf heifers precalving and prebreeding.

The cow herd is a maternal composite of five breeds: Red Angus, Tarentaise, Red Poll, South Devon and Devon. Cows are British in body type and production levels. Breed selection is aligned with year-round grazing and the low-input system of the ranch.

Maddux Cattle Co. is nominated by the Nebraska Cattlemen.

Matador Cattle Co.

Owner: Koch Agriculture Co., a subsidiary of Koch Industries Inc.

**Manager: Randy Lair
Wichita, Kan.**

The Matador Cattle Co., a division of Koch Agriculture Co., operates three ranches: Beaverhead in Montana, Spring Creek in Kansas and Matador in Texas. Originally acquired by Fred C. Koch in the

1940s and 1950s, the ranches encompass 425,000 acres, including about 240,000 deeded acres.

The company employs a market-based approach to management, ensuring the ranch's ability to create real long-term value for customers and society. As a result, an intensely challenged decision-making framework is employed to ensure an optimal balance between livestock, wildlife and natural resources.

The ranch is 100% owned by The Matador Cattle Co., an indirect subsidiary of Koch Industries Inc. The ranch's primary income is from the marketing of cattle, hunts and horses.

The ranches annually wean about 10,000 calves and support more than 15,000 head of mostly Hereford and Angus commercial cattle. In 2010 and 2011, the company began to shift its sire base to Akaushi bulls.

The Texas ranch raises Quarter Horses

BIF Seedstock Elite

The Beef Improvement Federation announces 2012

Seedstock Producer of the Year nominees.

Each year, the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) recognizes seedstock herds nominated by affiliated organizations for the BIF Seedstock Producer of the Year award. All nominees are recognized during an awards luncheon hosted during the BIF research symposium and annual meeting. This year's event — sponsored by Texas A&M University and hosted by the American Brahman Breeders Association (ABBA) — was scheduled for April 18-21 in Houston, Texas. The overall winner was yet to be named as of this publication.

Here are the nominees:

Bianchi Ranches

**Owners/Managers: Robert, Chris and Erica Bianchi
Gilroy, Calif.**

The Bianchi Ranches operation is located in the foothills east of Gilroy in Santa Clara County. They have managed cattle at this location for more than 20 years. Purebred cows are wintered in the hills along with their commercial herd. In the summer, the spring-calving cows are managed on 60 acres of permanent pasture, and the rest are managed on dryland hayfields.

The operation consists of 120 Charolais cows, 40 Hereford cows, 15 Red Angus cows

and 50 Pinzgauer cows. They also manage 300 commercial cows. They calve in the spring and fall because they have a variety of bull buyers who purchase bulls to use at different times of the year. Typically, buyers from California turn out bulls in the fall, and buyers from Oregon and Nevada turn their bulls out in the spring, and they like to be able to meet the needs of both customers. Charolais bulls are used on the mature cows, while Red Angus bulls are used on their first-calf heifers. They are constantly trying to produce bulls for their buyers that will meet all of their needs. They use the bulls they produce on their own commercial cows, as well. If they would not use the bulls on their own herd, they will not sell them to anyone else to use.

Bianchi Ranches was nominated by the California Beef Cattle Improvement Association (BCIA).

EJ Shepherd Charolais

**Owners/Managers: Everett and Julie
Shepherd
Stuart, Iowa**

The EJ Shepherd Charolais herd is located on the farm of Everett and Julie Shepherd near Stuart, Iowa. They have been in the cattle business for 46 years and have

been producing Charolais cattle for 36 years.

The Shepherds started with a registered Angus herd. They crossed them with black white-face (baldie) Simmental for 10 years, then gradually eliminated them and went to purebred Charolais. They have decreased their cow herd from 200 head to 65 head. Their calving seasons are from Jan. 15 to March 30 and from Aug. 15 to Oct. 15.

They started with hogs, cattle, corn, beans, hay and permanent pasture. They eliminated the hogs about 20 years ago. They utilize the rough ground for hay and pasture and bring their cows home to graze on cornstalks after harvest.

The American International Charolais Association (AICA) nominated EJ Shepherd Charolais.

HeartBrand Beef

**Owners: Ronald and Joan Beeman
Managers: Jojo and Kaci Carrales &
Jacob Tipp
Harwood, Texas**

HeartBrand Beef Inc. is a very diverse operation located southeast of Austin, Texas, in Caldwell County. HeartBrand has been raising Akaushi cattle for their Branded Beef Program since 1995. Although the headquarters is southeast of

for ranch use and external markets. As the demand for high-end hunting and outdoor recreation has grown, Matador Ranch also has expanded its wildlife program. The ranch markets trophy deer hunts, along with turkey, quail, dove and predator hunts.

The Matador Cattle Co. is nominated by the American Akaushi Association.

Slykhuis Farms

Owners: Charles and Todd Slykhuis

Manager: Todd Slykhuis

Raleigh, Ill.

Slykhuis Farms of Raleigh, Ill., was the recipient of the Illinois Beef Association (IBA) Commercial Producer of the Year Award at the 2010 IBA Annual Meeting. Slykhuis Farms is owned and operated by Charles and Virginia Slykhuis and Todd Slykhuis of Raleigh. This award is presented to progressive, performance-oriented commercial cow-calf producers who utilize the latest in breeding, management and forage production to optimize the

production and profitability of their operation.

Slykhuis Farms was founded by Charles in 1972 with the purchase of 392 acres. Since then, the farm has expanded to more than 1,000 acres comprised of cash crops of 140 acres corn, 285 acres of soybeans and 40 acres of wheat. Besides these cash crops, there are 100 acres of hay and 450 acres of pasture.

The cattle operation was started in 1972 with 100 cows with the farm. The cattle operation was moved to a spring- and fall-calving herd through the early 1980s. The number of brood cows was reduced in the late 1980s; however, more rapid expansion is planned in the number of brood cows, up to 270 in 2010, with plans to continue to expand up to 400 brood cows in the future. Besides these brood cows, there are usually 75-100 head of replacement heifers being developed and bred.

Not only has the number of cows increased, but the performance and quality

of the herd sires has made dramatic improvement. In recent years, an aggressive AI program has been implemented with close to 400 brood cows and heifers bred via AI in 2010.

The University of Illinois Extension and the Illinois Beef Association nominated Slykhuis Farms.

BIF has been a means to standardize programs and methodology and to create greater awareness, acceptance and usage of beef cattle performance concepts for more than 40 years. The 44th Annual BIF Research Symposium and Annual Meeting, conducted April 18-21 in Houston, Texas, was sponsored by Texas A&M University and hosted by ABBA. For more information about BIF and the conference, log on to www.BIFconference.com or www.beefimprovement.org. 

Editor's Note: *Original bios of the commercial nominees were provided by BIF.*

Austin, HeartBrand raises more than 1,600 Akaushi cows from Idaho to Texas. Due to the fact of different climates and keeping a constant supply of fresh beef, HeartBrand is split into dual calving seasons. The concept of source-verifying 100% of their beef product requires staff effort from multiple sectors of production.

HeartBrand raises and sells full-blood Akaushi genetics through private treaty to commercial cattlemen throughout the United States who will source the Akaushi-sired calves back to the HeartBrand Beef Program. This program is the first of its kind to require breed designation through DNA parentage. Customers who purchase Akaushi bulls not only become members of the American Akaushi Association, but they are provided with a premium buy-back guarantee.

HeartBrand raises 100% of its replacement females, and, on average, keeps the top 60% of the female calf crop. The heifers are developed after weaning at HeartBrand's grower operation and are artificially inseminated to calve at 24 months.

Besides following the strict guidelines that go into HeartBrand's Beef program (like no added growth promotants and no antibiotics in the final feeding phase), HeartBrand is also USDA-verified as Non-Hormone Treated Cattle (NHTC) and sourced and aged.

HeartBrand Beef was nominated by the American Akaushi Association.

Hounshell Farms

Owners/Managers: W.C. 'Buster' Hounshell and Clayton Hounshell
Wytheville, Va.

Located in the western portion of Wythe County, Va., Hounshell Farms qualifies as a Centurion farm dating back to the late 1700s. Current owners Clayton and Buster Hounshell (father and son), created a partnership in the mid-1970s that continues today. Buster's two sons, Greg and Jason, and their children make up the seventh and eighth generations to work this farm of 650+ acres owned and leased.

From the time Buster graduated from Virginia Tech in 1969, his appreciation for the Simmental breed resulted in changing the Hereford-based cattle operation into the first purebred, registered black Simmental herd in Southwest Virginia.

Artificial insemination (AI) was a priority in developing the herd. Currently, there are 185 head of black Simmental females — approximately 110 SimAngus, with the balance being purebred black Simmentals. Using a fall- and spring-calving program, Hounshell Farms calves 135 fall cows and approximately 50 spring cows.

Performance evaluation began through recording data with the American Simmental Association (ASA) and the Virginia BCIA. Since 1980, females have been recorded with ASA. The first bulls were tested in 1987 through the Virginia Beef Cattle Improvement Association (BCIA) program.

In an effort to improve herd performance and enhance data, Hounshell Farms began participating in Virginia's Retained Ownership Program in 1997. Since 2000, all calves (except those used for bull development or female replacement) have been shipped to Circle Five Beef Inc. in Henderson, Neb. Data is received on these cattle and serves as one of the criteria for bull and female replacement selection. The retained ownership program also allows Hounshell Farms to receive premiums from age and source verification and extra value created by known genetics.

The Virginia BCIA nominated Hounshell Farms.

Liberty Ranch

Owner: Roger Comeau

Manager: Mike Smith

Plainville, Kan.

Liberty Ranch (LR) was founded in 1976 in the Post Rock country of the Saline River Valley in western North Central Kansas. Liberty Ranch's cow herd has ranged from 1,000 to 1,500 females composed of primarily Limousin, Red Angus and Angus cows. The ranch was intensely involved in commercial cow-calf production in the early years, but it has placed more emphasis in the last 30 years on seedstock production. Liberty Ranch females calve predominantly in the spring, with 10%-20% calving in the fall. Postweaning, the calves are backgrounded

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on-site in the Liberty Ranch feeding facilities.

Through the years, the ranch has placed emphasis on purchasing Liberty Ranch-sired calves from their customers to bring home and background prior to being sent to commercial feedlots. The ranch has participated in numerous value-added beef programs, including Laura's Lean, U.S. Premium Beef (USPB), Decatur County, Tyson and numerous other beef grids in the early years.

Selection pressure has been applied over the years to raise a better cow for the environment and management philosophy, while maintaining feed efficiency, performance and balanced carcass traits in Liberty Ranch fed cattle.

The ranch has emphasized making educational and informational events accessible to customers and neighbors. Liberty Ranch is in constant pursuit of being better stewards of the land, focusing on low-stress livestock handling and prioritizing superior animal health protocols. Customer satisfaction is always its No. 1 priority.

The North American Limousin Foundation (NALF) nominated Liberty Ranch.

McCurry Bros. Angus

Founding Partners: Dale, O'Dell and Cecil McCurry

Managing Partners: Greg, Brad, Geoff and Barry McCurry
Sedgwick, Kan.

McCurry Bros. Angus is a family-owned and -managed operation located in Sedgwick and Harvey counties near Sedgwick, Kan. The cow herd originated when Walter McCurry purchased two Angus heifers from his brother-in-law, Johnson Workman, in 1928. Many bloodlines today can be traced back to Workman's herd, which descended from the very first Angus cattle imported to the United States, specifically to Victoria, Kan., by George Grant. In 1958, Walter's five sons — A.J., Dale, O'Dell, Bob and Cecil — formed McCurry Bros. Angus. Dale, O'Dell and Cecil McCurry still are involved in the business. The day-to-day operations are managed by partners Greg, Brad, Geoff and Barry McCurry, who represent the third generation on the ranch and bring a lifetime of experience to the business.

Today, McCurry Bros. Angus consists of about 550 registered Angus cows, of which two-thirds calve in the spring and one-third in the fall, and an irrigated and dryland farming business. About 150 bulls are sold

yearly through private treaty. With 85% of their customers being commercial cattlemen, they strive to produce functional, trouble-free cattle that excel on pasture, in the feedyard and on the rail. Proven carcass genetics are used in the herd. At the same time, they acknowledge there are traits that expected progeny differences (EPDs) can't measure, and work to keep the herd structurally correct and sound. AI, embryo transfer (ET), EPDs and ultrasound are used to produce consistent cattle with superior genetics.

The Kansas Livestock Association (KLA) nominated McCurry Bros. Angus.

Perks Ranch

Owner: Doug Perks

Managers: Tom and Tammy Boatman
Rockford, Ill.

Perks Ranch was founded as a working horse and cattle ranch in 1961. Owned by Doug Perks and operated by Tom and Tammy Boatman, the ranch is located in Rockford, Ill. Averaging 36 inches of rain annually, the ranch includes rolling grasslands, cropland and protected forest. The Perks Ranch program has been built on Hereford genetics and included Red Angus cattle from 1999-2010. With approximately 120 registered Herefords and 75 commercial cows now, they are rebuilding the herd with a goal of reaching 150 Herefords and 100 commercial females.

A dual calving season is utilized to diversify risk and take advantage of different marketing opportunities throughout the seasonal cattle cycles. Spring calving is within a strict 90-day window, ranging from Feb. 1 until April 30. Fall calving's 30-day season spans from Sept. 1 until Sept. 30. Females are marketed through an annual fall production sale at the ranch, and in spring they are sold through a partner's sale in Oklahoma. Bulls are sold off the ranch by private treaty, as well as at their Oklahoma cooperator's location.

Perks Ranch is in the beef business because they enjoy what they do. Helping producers stay profitable through genetic improvement within their own herd ensures consumer satisfaction and keeps them going and striving to improve on a daily basis.

Perks Ranch was nominated by the University of Illinois Extension and the Illinois Beef Association.

Schuler Red Angus

Owners: The Darrell Schuler Family

Manager: Butch Schuler
Bridgeport, Neb.

Located in the panhandle of western Nebraska, Schuler-Olsen Ranches was started by Darrell and Mary Lou Schuler in 1959 with commercial Hereford cattle. A crossbreeding program was implemented in the 1970s after witnessing the benefits of heterosis and breed complementarity firsthand. A registered Red Angus herd was started in 1976 to develop genetics for use on the ranch's commercial cattle and to sell to neighboring ranchers.

The seedstock herd expanded in the 1980s and was improved through AI, utilization of EPDs and a complete performance-testing program. Recognizing the need for identifiable carcass traits, in 1991 Schuler Red Angus began finishing its commercial progeny and collecting carcass data. This program soon grew into a structured carcass progeny test, including customer cattle sired by Schuler Red Angus bulls. Today, more than 25% of the Red Angus breed's high-accuracy carcass trait sires have been proven by Schuler Red Angus.

A composite seedstock herd called "Schuler Reds" was started in 1992. It included Red Angus, Hereford, Gelbvieh and Simmental genetics, giving Schuler Red Angus customers the opportunity to add heterosis and breed complements via a simple crossbreeding system.

The current ranching operation encompasses 17,000 acres, including 2,000 acres of private pasture leases and 1,250 acres of irrigated farm ground. Butch and Susan Schuler, with children Stephanie and David, manage the operation today with approximately 1,000 head of spring-calving females. The Schulers hosted their 30th production sale this spring, selling 150 registered Red Angus and Schuler Red composite bulls.

The Red Angus Association of America along with the Nebraska Cattlemen nominated Schuler Red Angus.

Springfield Angus

Owner: Phil Goodson

Manager: Brett Flach
Louisburg, N.C.

Springfield Angus, located near Louisburg, N.C., is a progressive seedstock operation owned by Phil Goodson. Farm manager is Brett Flach.

Reared on a diversified farm that included commercial beef cattle, Goodson showed beef animals in 4-H and was determined to own a purebred Angus herd. He earned an MD degree, served as a U.S. Air Force flight surgeon, and then had a distinguished career as a surgeon in Raleigh, N.C.

In 1976, he purchased a farm and four bred Angus heifers to begin fulfilling his dream. He established the goal of developing a profitable, sustainable farm producing genetically superior seedstock for commercial producers.

With expanding customer demand, Goodson purchased the present 400-acre farm in 1983, with an additional leased 120 acres. Springfield is calving 250 females and 150 recipients.

The breeding program represents a balance of low to moderate birth weights with strong maternal, growth and carcass genetics utilizing elite sires. Goals are to provide producers breeding stock that excel in all areas and to assist customers in marketing. Top-performing bulls completing Springfield's on-farm bull tests and passing rigorous reproductive soundness exams are marketed by private treaty. Females are marketed through private treaty and production sales.

Goodson seeks advice from university and industry experts in developing breeding, health, nutrition, forage and management programs. An early adopter of technologies that help further his goals, he has continuously incorporated an embryo program since 1982, produced the first recorded cloned Angus bull, and more recently incorporated ultrasound and genomic profiling into breeding and selection. Goodson currently has two bulls in AI studs.

Goodson is a leader in the North Carolina Angus Association, the North Carolina Cattlemen's Association, the North Carolina Cattlemen's Beef Council, and the North Carolina Cattlemen's Foundation.

The North Carolina Beef Cattle Improvement Program nominated Springfield Angus.

Tanner Farms

Owners: Gary and Lorrie Tanner

Manager: Tim Hardy
Ellisville, Miss.

Gary and Lorrie Tanner were both raised on family farms. High school sweethearts, they married during their college years. They returned home to begin a business, teach school, raise a family and manage the herd that is Tanner Farms today.

Tanner Farms is a grassroots, registered and commercial Angus operation. It originated in Jones County in 1977 and expanded to Noxubee County in 2000. There are approximately 600 registered cows and 800 commercial cows with both a spring and a fall calving season. The goal is to produce functional and profitable Angus

cattle, not only for their own operation, but also for those of their customers. They continually strive to improve on the strong genetic base that has served as the foundation of their program.

Tanner Farms was nominated by the Mississippi BCIA.

V8 Ranch

Owners: Sloan and Mollie Williams

**Managers: Jim and Luann Williams;
Brandon and Rachel Cutrer**
Boling, Texas

V8 Ranch is a registered Brahman and Shorthorn cattle operation that was established in 1944. In 1971, the ranch was purchased by Sloan & Mollie Williams who have served as owners for 41 years. As a hands-on, working family ranch, they are very proud of the fact that V8 Ranch has been worked and managed by their immediate family each and every day of the year. They are also proud that today there are three generations of the family working together daily for their combined goals of success.

The ranch operates in a four-county area on approximately 5,000 acres of land, both owned and leased, along the Texas gulf coast. The purebred Brahman herd consists of 300 breeding-age females with a large emphasis on ET. Their Brahman herd is primarily a closed herd, with a focus on linebreeding exceptional cow families since 1944. The purebred Shorthorn herd includes 30 breeding-age females.

In addition to these herds, they currently own and manage a commercial herd of 1,400 females that are part of their Brahman F₁ program. These Brahman-influence females are used in a three-breed rotation mated to Angus and Hereford bulls to create Brahman F₁s. The resulting offspring are then bred to Charolais and Angus bulls for terminal crosses. While they are known for their purebred herds, they feel their experience as a commercial producer gives them an advantage as a seedstock producer since they also have more than 50 years of making a living in the commercial business. Their commercial herd is also used as a tool to show their commercial bull buyers a practical example of how to use their Brahman cattle in a crossbreeding program.

V8 Ranch was nominated by the ABBA.

Williams Angus Farm

Owners/Managers: Joe and Faye Williams
Newton, Ala.

Williams Angus Farm is located in the southeast corner of Alabama in Dale County. Angus cattle were first purchased

49 years ago. Farm operations began at the current location in 1964. Today, Williams Angus Farm has an Angus seedstock operation with a cow herd of approximately 150 head. A 90-day fall calving season is planned to capitalize on high-quality, cool-season grazing and to meet marketing goals.

In addition to Angus seedstock production, the farm is comprised of several agricultural enterprises, such as commercial beef cattle, peanuts, cotton, small grains, grain sorghum, hay and corn silage. While complementary, these enterprises were selected to diversify the farm for flexible, sustainable production.

The prime directive of the Williams Angus Farm seedstock operation is to produce high-quality seedstock that are functional, practical and performance-oriented for commercial beef production in the Southeast. The ultimate goal is to produce high-quality, high-value herd sires that will sire feeder cattle that excel in all beef industry segments and demand premium market prices. The breeding program of the seedstock operation, emphasizing economically important traits, is designed to complement and fill the needs of their commercial customers, as well as their own commercial operation.

Eighteen years ago, Williams Angus Farm came together with like-minded cattle producers to establish the Southeast Alabama Feeder Cattle Marketing Association. The education gained through interaction with the feeder-cattle buyers, stocker producers and feedlot operators has provided a deeper perspective of the beef industry and refocused the prime directive for the Angus seedstock enterprise toward producing high-quality beef.

Williams Angus Farm was nominated by the Alabama BCIA.

BIF has been a means to standardize programs and methodology and to create greater awareness, acceptance and usage of beef cattle performance concepts for more than 40 years. The 44th Annual BIF Research Symposium and Annual Meeting, scheduled to be April 18-21 in Houston, Texas, was sponsored by Texas A&M University and hosted by the ABBA. For more information about BIF and the conference, log on to www.BIFconference.com or www.beefimprovement.org.



Editor's Note: Original bios of the seedstock nominees were provided by BIF.