

Angus Members Honored at BIF

Beef Improvement Federation recognizes those who excel in Athens, Ga.

by *Angie Denton, Kansas State University*

The Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) honored individuals during two awards luncheons at the group's annual meeting and symposium convened in Athens, Ga., May 31-June 3. Several Angus members were among the honorees.

Commercial Producer of Year

John and Gina Mundhenke of

Mundhenke Beef, Lewis, Kan., were honored as BIF Commercial Producer of the Year to recognize their dedication to improving the beef industry at the commercial level.

Diversification, commitment to principles and an underlying desire to make improvements each day are what make Mundhenke Beef a successful ag enterprise. Mundhenke Beef encompasses an Angus-based cow-calf herd, backgrounding yard and farming business. All enterprises are managed carefully and provide the diversification necessary to shoulder risk and uncertainty in agriculture. Although the operation is diverse, the priority remains with the cow herd and its ability to produce high-quality beef.

They started their herd with commercial black Angus females, artificially inseminating (AIing) them annually. They purchased 20 registered Angus donor females and, through several years of embryo transfer (ET) and using commercial cows as recipient females, they replaced the core herd with registered Angus.

Mundhenkes use a seven-day CO-Synch + CIDR fixed-time AI program on all their replacement heifers and 250 cows. They raise their own bulls and try to use full-brother sons of the sires they AI to for cleanup. Commercial cows are bred by natural service to Angus bulls.

Through wise utilization of natural resources and years of selective breeding, Mundhenke Beef has developed an efficient, high-producing cow herd that yields offspring targeted for value-added, high-quality markets.

With the goal of constantly improving to meet customer demand, Mundhenke Beef is positioned to be a leader in the beef industry for generations.

Seedstock Producer of Year

BIF presented **Hunt Limousin Ranch**, Oxford, Neb., the BIF Seedstock Producer of the Year Award to recognize their dedication

to improving the beef industry at the seedstock level.

The Charles Hunt Family operation began in the 1960s after Charlie attended the University of Nebraska (NU). Currently, the 6,500-acre diversified operation consists of dryland and irrigated corn, soybeans, alfalfa, wheat and grass supporting 300 cows, private-treaty bulls and replacement females.

The goal at Hunt Limousin is to “conserve the land for the future generations, keep current and knowledgeable on the leading cattle issues, provide high-quality cattle for a fair price, and treat people with honesty and integrity.”

Collecting and utilizing performance records form the backbone of their business. The family developed the “Hunt Herd Manager” computer program to track breeding data, calf data, cow and sire data, mailing lists, customer purchases and files where they can enter and track expected progeny differences (EPDs). The Hunt family believes strongly in total herd reporting.

In 1995, the Hunt family started a customer buy-back program. In 2000, they expanded their heifer development program, bull sales, ET work and row-crop farming ventures.

Charlie and his wife, Nancy, have four children, David, Susan, Sally and Daniel; and nine grandchildren.

BIF Pioneer awards

BIF annually recognizes with the Pioneer Award individuals who have had a major role in acceptance of performance reporting and documentation as the primary means to make genetic change in beef cattle. Two such individuals — Harvey Lemmon (posthumously) and Dorian Garrick — were honored in Athens.

Harvey Lemmon's love of livestock began as a youngster growing up in southwest Virginia. He purchased his first bred, registered Angus heifer at the age of 9. That heifer went on to have a daughter that was



► Mundhenke Beef was named 2017 BIF Commercial Producer of the Year. Pictured are (from left) John and Gina Mundhenke of Mundhenke Beef and Jay Carlson of *BEEF* magazine, award sponsor.

named the 1957 Virginia State Fair Junior Show grand champion and ignited his fire for the Angus business.

After receiving a bachelor's degree in animal science from Virginia Tech, he began his career at Millarden Farms as a cattle manager. In 1971, he established his own cattle farm, Lemmon Cattle Enterprises, in Woodbury, Ga. He was the owner and operator of Lemmon Cattle Enterprises for 46 years until he passed away in January 2017.

“From the beginning, performance testing and the use of performance records to track genetic progress were instrumental in the development of the Lemmon program,” said David Gazda, American Angus Association regional manager. “Over the years, Lemmon consignments would top Georgia bull test stations, while others found their way into many of the major AI organizations.”



► Harvey Lemmon was recognized posthumously with the BIF Pioneer Award. Pictured are Harvey's wife, Nina, and David Gazda, American Angus Association regional manager, presenting.

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As technology advanced, Lemmon used AI and ET to access the top genetics in the breed and replicate his most productive cows. Carcass ultrasound and genomic testing were also employed.

Lemmon served on the American Angus Association board, including a term as president. He was president of the Georgia Angus Association, BIF and the Georgia Cattleman's Association. He also served on the Cattleman's Beef Board, Georgia Angus Association, AgSouth Farm Credit, Georgia Bull Test Committee and Georgia Beef Board. He served on the board and was chairman of Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) and West Georgia Farm Credit. He was a member of the national and Georgia Cattleman's beef associations and Georgia Farm Bureau.

Since February 2017, **Dorian Garrick** has been chief scientist at Massey University's campus in Hamilton, New Zealand, following 15 years working in the United States. In 1981, he earned his bachelor's degree in agricultural science from Massey University in his home country of New Zealand and then a doctorate from Cornell University in 1988. He was named to the Jay Lush Endowed Chair in Animal Breeding and Genetics at Iowa State University (ISU) in 2007 and served in that position for 10 years. He is also the executive director of the National Beef Cattle Evaluation Consortium (NBCEC).

Garrick's research projects are to improve the accuracy of predicted genetic and phenotypic merit using high-density genomic information. His work focuses on the portfolio of endeavors that are involved in the design, enhancement, implementation and monitoring of genetic improvement programs. These include aspects of genetics, economics, statistics and biology. Attention is directed at variance component estimation, prediction of breeding values, development of breeding objectives, exploitation of breed/heterosis effects and breeding industry structure, primarily in regard to their application to the national improvement of beef cattle, but other species are also considered.

Most recently, his applied industry work has been through Theta Solutions LLC, a company Bruce Golden and Garrick formed to develop state-of-the-art computation tools for large-scale genetic and genomic analyses, licensing software that is used for single-step analyses in a range of species.

In New Zealand he is involved through his 60% university appointment in international beef cattle evaluations and in developing better descriptors for maternal cow attributes, in addition to continuing to develop new algorithms for genomic analyses.

Continuing Service awards

BIF presented four Continuing Service Awards in Athens, recognizing individuals who have made major contributions to the BIF organization. Honored this year were Kevin and Lydia Yon, Ridge Spring, S.C.; Matt Spangler, Lincoln, Neb.; Michelle Elmore, Canton, Ala.; and Shauna Hermel, Saint Joseph, Mo.

Yon Family Farms is a first-generation family ranch. Kevin and Lydia met as animal science majors at Clemson University. After college, they landed their dream job, managing Congaree Farms, a registered Angus operation near Columbia, S.C. After seven and a half years of growth there, the owner decided to disperse.

"I think what makes Yons unique is that they've built such a large, successful operation in a short amount of time on their own," said Dan Moser, Angus Genetics Inc. president. "They bought a core group of cows from the Congaree herd and built their program on their own in a new location."

In just 12 years their farm has grown from 100 acres and 100 cows to 1,500 acres of crop, hay and pastureland and more than 800 Angus and 200 commercial cows. Their three children have now graduated from college and have returned home to work at the farm full-time.

"Kevin and Lydia give an inordinate amount of their time in service to our industry," Moser said.

Kevin is currently vice president of the American Angus Association and has served as chairman of the AGI, CAB and Angus Productions Inc. (API) boards. He has served as president of the South Carolina Angus Association and South Carolina Cattleman's Association, and on numerous committees for South Carolina Farm Bureau and Clemson University. He is a past BIF director

and served on the advisory board for the NBCEC.

Lydia has served as a director of the South Carolina Cattleman's Association, secretary of the South Carolina Angus Association, director of AgSouth Farm Credit and on the Clemson University Board of Visitors.

Matt Spangler grew up on a diversified crop and livestock farm in Kansas. He received his bachelor's degree from Kansas State University (K-State), a master's degree from Iowa State and his doctorate from the University of Georgia. He is currently an associate professor and extension beef genetics specialist at NU.

He works as part of a team with colleagues at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (USMARC) at Clay Center, Neb., to improve genetic/genomic selection tools and methods and is currently part of an effort funded by the USDA to develop genomic predictors for feed efficiency in beef cattle.

His nationally recognized extension program has resulted in 19 extension publications and industry reports, as well as 220 invited presentations at state, regional, national or international meetings. He has also authored or co-authored 20 peer-reviewed journal articles, 35 meeting proceedings, 46 abstracts and five book chapters.

Michelle Elmore has been involved in the purebred and commercial cattle industry her entire life. In 2001, she began her career with Alabama Cooperative Extension as the Alabama Beef Cattle Improvement Association (BCIA) coordinator and extension animal scientist. Through her determination and hard work, Alabama BCIA has remained a vital part of Alabama beef cattle production. She is the voice

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► Kevin and Lydia Yon (center) receive the BIF Continuing Service Award presented by Dan Moser, Angus Genetics Inc. president (far left) and Marty Ropp, 2016-17 BIF president.

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and face of Alabama BCIA and serves as coordinator and primary contact for Alabama BCIA sales, events and programs.

Currently, Elmore annually organizes two bull sales and three BCIA Genetic Verified replacement heifer sales. She is the editor of the quarterly BCIA newsletter. She also is directly responsible for a seedstock education series that serves to teach seedstock producers how to use emerging genetic and reproductive technologies in their herds, and to properly record and utilize performance records.

Elmore has been instrumental in teaching commercial producers the importance of performance recordkeeping. She has transitioned Alabama BCIA from utilizing a university-based program to an individual computer program to an online recordkeeping system during her 16 years of service. She annually assists producers in processing cattle records and consults with commercial producers through the BCIA commercial recordkeeping program.

Her service to BIF includes the preparation of numerous seedstock and commercial producer award nominations from Alabama BCIA each year. She has given an invited talk in the Producer Applications committee session at BIF and helped moderate a breakout session, as well.

A native of Shuqualak, Miss., she was raised on a Brangus seedstock and commercial operation and represents the eighth generation of her family's agriculture business. Elmore currently lives in Clanton, Ala., with her husband, Josh, and children, Gentry and Emma.

Shauna Hermel has served as editor of the *Angus Journal* and *Angus Beef Bulletin* since September 1997. In this role, she is responsible for a six-person in-house editorial team, as well as coordinating editorial contributions of five field editors; approximately 25 freelancers; and the communications teams of the American Angus Association, Angus Foundation, AGI and CAB.

During her tenure at Angus, she initiated and is responsible for the organization's venture into online coverage of industry events, including the BIF symposium (www.bifconference.com), which she has coordinated annually since 2002.

She won the BIF Ambassador Award in 1999 for her efforts in spreading the news of BIF and its principles to a larger audience.

Prior to working for API, Hermel was assistant and then associate editor for *National Hog Farmer* and *BEEF* magazines in Minneapolis, Minn. She is recognized as a Level 5 Master Writer by the American Agricultural Editors' Association (AAEA) and has won numerous writing and photography

awards through AAEA and the Livestock Publications Council (LPC). She has served on the LPC Board of Directors and as chairman for the Ag Media Summit.

She was raised on a purebred livestock operation focused on Angus cattle and Hampshire hogs in northeast Missouri. Hermel currently resides in Saint Joseph with her husband, Todd.

BIF Ambassador Award

BIF presented **Kevin Ochsner**, Kersey, Colo., its Ambassador Award, given annually to a member of the media for his or her efforts in spreading the news of BIF and its principles to a larger audience.

Ochsner was raised on an irrigated farm and registered cattle operation near Fort Collins, Colo. He attended CSU and graduated with a bachelor's degree in agribusiness. Ochsner was a member of the CSU livestock judging team, earning high individual honors at the National Intercollegiate Livestock Judging Contest. He was actively involved in FFA, serving as a national FFA officer in 1987-1988. In 1997, Kevin earned his master's degree in management from the Krannert School of Business at Purdue University.

He spent more than two decades working for the Indianapolis-based consulting firm Adayana Agribusiness Group Inc. before founding his own consulting practice, Agcelerate LLC. During the past 26 years, he has provided strategic planning, marketing consulting, sales/management training and keynote speaking services.

Ochsner is best known for his role as host of NCBA's *Cattlemen to Cattlemen* TV show, seen weekly on RFD-TV.

He, his wife, Julie; and their three children, Caitlyn, Ashlyn and Collin, make their home in near Kersey, Colo.

Baker/Cundiff honors

The annual Frank Baker/Larry Cundiff Beef Improvement Essay Contest for graduate students provides an opportunity to recognize outstanding student research and competitive writing in honor of Frank Baker and Larry Cundiff. This year's winners are **Cashley Ahlberg**, K-State, and **Lindsay Upperman**, University of California-Davis.



► Shauna Hermel (middle), *Angus Journal* editor, receives the BIF Continuing Service Award from Ropp (left); and Donnell Brown (right), 2017-18 BIF president.

Ahlberg is working on her doctorate in genetics and animal breeding at K-State. Her essay was titled "The importance of water-efficient and adaptable beef cattle." Upperman is working on her master's degree in animal biology at UC-Davis. Her essay was titled "Management of lethal recessive alleles while optimizing genetic gain in beef cattle."

Each year two winning essays are selected and published in the annual *BIF Research Symposium and Annual Meeting Proceedings*. Each winning author will receive a \$1,000 scholarship.

Roy Wallace Scholarships

BIF presented Roy A. Wallace Memorial Scholarships to **Dustin** and **Tanner Aherin** from Phillipsburg, Kan. These scholarships were established to encourage young men and women interested in beef improvement to pursue those interests as Wallace did, with dedication and passion.

Winner of the graduate student award, Dustin completed his master's degree at K-State in May and is now starting his doctorate at K-State through the Beef Cattle Institute. His thesis project focused on the economic risk analysis of *Bos taurus* ET programs through stochastic simulation.

Tanner is this year's undergraduate winner. He also attends K-State and graduated in May with a bachelor's degree in ag economics and a minor in animal sciences and industry. He will begin his graduate program this fall at K-State.

More than 350 beef producers, academia and industry representatives attended BIF's 49th annual convention. For Angus Media's online coverage of the symposium, visit www.bifconference.com.