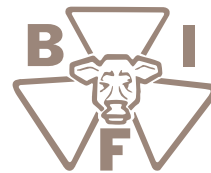


# BIF Honorees



Beef Improvement Federation honors those who have made an impact.

compiled by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

**M**ore than 600 beef producers, academia and industry representatives were in attendance at the Beef Improvement Federation's (BIF's) 48th annual convention, themed "Progress on the Prairie," June 14-17 in Manhattan, Kan. Angus Media was on hand to cover the event, which featured two and half days of educational programming, tours visiting recent winners of the organization's seedstock and commercial producers of the year, and the honoring of several individuals whose contributions to beef improvement deserve recognition.

For full coverage of the event, visit the Newsroom and awards pages at [www.bifconference.com](http://www.bifconference.com). Following are some highlights of this year's award winners.

## Producers of the year

BIF named Shaw Cattle Co., Caldwell, Idaho, **Seedstock Producer of the Year**.

The ranch manages Hereford, Angus and Red Angus herds in a diversified system of irrigated rotational grazing, maximizing forage resources and beef cattle genetics. The Shaw family works together to improve their cow herd, including 1,500 registered cows, through the diligent selection of breed-leading genetics with a keen eye toward performance, science and technology.

A registered-Hereford heifer given to Tom Shaw as payment for summers worked at a neighbor's and as a thank-you for serving his country laid the foundation for Shaw Hereford Ranch in 1946. By 1959, Tom had married Mary, started a family and purchased a home near Notus, Idaho. They moved to the current headquarters and continued to build a cow herd and raise a family.

Tom and Mary's youngest son, Greg, officially joined the operation after graduation in 1968 and married Cleo two years later. In 1988, the Shaw cow herd was divided into three herds. Greg and Cleo remained on the original home place at Caldwell and subsequently formed Shaw Cattle Co. Angus genetics, first red then black, were added in 1990 and 1996, respectively.

Greg and Cleo's son, Sam, returned to the ranch in 1999. Sam and his wife, Janel, are raising their three daughters on the ranch. Tom and Mary's son Tucker returned with his wife, Angie, in 2003. They are raising their five children on the ranch.

BIF named Plum Thicket Farms, Gordon, Neb., its **Commercial Producer of the Year**.

Plum Thicket Farms is a family operation with a passion for raising excellent beef cattle and improving the range and soil that are their livelihood. Located in the Nebraska panhandle, Plum Thicket calves 325 SimAngus cows and operates a small backgrounding lot.

Rex and Nancy Peterson head the cattle operation. After two tours of duty with the National Guard, their son, Patrick, came home to lead the farming operation. Patrick is passionate about improving soil health and conserving resources. His wife, Krista, is a large-animal veterinarian with a mobile practice in the area. She did a food-animal internship at Kansas State University's College of Veterinary Medicine and is a welcome addition to their management team.

The family purchased the core of the ranch, along with 200 Angus cows, in January 1998. Today, the farm includes 4,000 acres of native range, grazed in a rest-deferred rotational grazing system. They no-till farm 2,300 acres, including 560 acres under pivot irrigation.

Whole-herd artificial insemination has been a staple of the Plum Thicket program. From the outset, they have maintained detailed individual performance records that follow cattle to the rail. Nancy utilized this data to make bull selections and culling decisions. She has steadily improved the genetic quality of their herd. Utilizing annual forages, their cattle live within an 11-month grazing program. They breed all of the heifers and select their replacements in the spring after they have had their first calf, selling young pairs that will likely go into a fall-calving herd. They background all of the steers on forage cocktails and swathed sorghum supplemented with dried distillers' grains and often retain ownership through the feedlot.

## Three named pioneers

BIF honored three with the Pioneer Award. The award recognizes individuals who have made lasting contributions to the improvement of beef cattle, honoring those who have had a major role in acceptance of performance reporting and documentation as the primary means to make genetic

change in beef cattle. Those honored included Bill Rishel, North Platte, Neb.; Ronnie Green, Lincoln, Neb.; and Doug Hixon, Laramie, Wyo.

**Rishel Angus** is known in the seedstock industry as one of the first to substantially commit to identifying and improving carcass merit.

Bill grew up on his family's diversified crop and livestock farm near York, Pa., and earned an animal husbandry degree from Pennsylvania State University. Rishel worked as assistant herdsman at Penn State while earning a master's degree in animal breeding.

Bill and his wife, Barb, married in 1966. Bill managed two Angus operations in New York before developing Rishel Angus in 1975. Rishel Angus has bred numerous bulls that have impacted the global beef industry, including B/R New Design 036, the No. 1 sire for Angus registrations in 2001 and 2002.

Rishel helped create Nebraska Cattlemen, serving as chairman of that organization's first Seedstock Council. He served as president of Nebraska Cattlemen in 2010. He has also served in leadership roles with the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) and the Nebraska Cattlemen's Classic.

Rishel served two terms as director of the American Angus Association, serving as chairman of the Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) board in 1996.

**Ronnie Green** has served the beef industry and BIF in many ways during his career, most recently being named the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's (UNL's) 20th chancellor after serving six years as the Harlan vice chancellor of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Since 2015, Green has also served as UNL's senior vice chancellor for academic affairs.

Green was raised on a mixed beef, dairy and cropping farm in southwestern Virginia. He received bachelor's and master's degrees in animal science from Virginia Tech and Colorado State University, respectively. His doctoral program in animal breeding and genetics was completed jointly at the University of Nebraska and the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) U.S.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 134

## **BIF Honorees** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 132

Meat Animal Research Center (USMARC) in 1988.

He has served on the animal science faculties at Texas Tech University and Colorado State University. He was also the national program leader for animal production research for the USDA ARS and executive secretary of the White House's interagency working group on animal genomics within the National Science and Technology Council, where he was one of the principal leaders in the international bovine, porcine and ovine genome-sequencing projects. Prior to joining the UNL faculty, he served as senior global director of technical services for Pfizer Animal Health's animal genomics business.

Green is a past president of both the

American Society of Animal Science and the National Block & Bridle Club. He has served in a number of leadership positions for BIF, NCBA, National Pork Board, Federated Animal Science Societies and the National Research Council.

**Doug Hixon** has been a nationally respected leader in bringing animal science research to cattle producers. He earned his bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in animal science at the University of Illinois (U of I). He managed the U of I beef cattle teaching and research unit from 1970 to 1980 and served as an assistant professor at the University of Tennessee from 1980 to 1982.

He joined the University of Wyoming animal science faculty in 1982 and worked as a professor, researcher and extension beef

cattle specialist for 19 years before being named department head in 2001. In that role he oversaw an integrated program in teaching, research and extension.

Hixon's research interest was in the area of beef cattle production and management with emphasis on reproduction and nutrition and their interaction. He focused on the effects of heifer development and management of 2-year-old first-calf heifers on future production under range conditions. Applied research was directed toward the evaluation of the effects management and cow herd winter nutrition programs have on production and reproductive efficiency.

Hixon served as the BIF Western Region secretary from 1986-1994.

