

Saddle & Sirloin to Honor Dave Nichols

Iowa Angus breeder to receive prestigious livestock honor this fall.

by Jena McReil, digital editor

Dave Nichols of Bridgewater, Iowa, has been selected as the 2015 inductee into the Saddle & Sirloin Portrait Gallery, largely considered the highest honor in the livestock industry. The Saddle & Sirloin Gallery was established in 1903 and recognizes one individual each year for his or her lifetime of exceptional service to the livestock business, both nationally and internationally.

Nichols was raised on his father's small-scale cattle-feeding operation. Starting as a tenant farm, Nichols Farms has grown under Dave's leadership to now encompass 5,500 acres, 1,500 head of breeding stock and a small feedlot. In addition, Nichols Farms oversees the breeding and marketing of an additional 750 cooperators and franchise cows.

Nichols Farms has placed 42 bulls in studs and has exported cattle, semen and embryos to 30 countries, resulting in five Palermo grand champions. During its 77-year history, all revenue of Nichols Farms has been generated from cattle.

At the age of 8, Nichols bought his first steer with a note from the bank in 1947. He entered the Angus seedstock business at the age of 13. In 1957 he won the national FFA Public Speaking Contest by discussing the merits of

performance-testing bulls, and he and his father started selling performance-tested Angus bulls that year.

Nichols began submitting weaning weights the first year the American Angus Association accepted them. By 1961 he had bred some of the early Certified Meat Sires proven through Performance Registry International (PRI). In the late 1960s, he added Simmental as a second breed and helped pioneer the breeding of black, polled Simmentals.

Nichols was influential in the early formation of the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) and served on its first board of directors starting in 1967. He later served as BIF president and continues to be a fixture at BIF meetings. For those efforts, he received BIF's Continuous Service Award, Seedstock Breeder of the Year award and Pioneer Breeder Award.

Today, Nichols Farms consists of Angus, Simmental, Angus-Simmental hybrids, and Angus-Simmental-South Devon composites. A leader in both the Angus and Simmental breeds, Nichols was elected to the American Simmental Association (ASA) board of directors, serving as its president in 1991. He currently serves on the board of directors of the American Angus Association.

Service

Throughout his career, Nichols has maintained a quest for knowledge and a desire to serve. This has led him to serve in numerous leadership positions and receive countless awards and accolades. Among the highlights was his service on the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Product Enhancement Subcommittee. With his leadership, this committee's accomplishments include the adoption of instrument grading and the \$5,000,000 Carcass Merit Program, which included the collection of SNP (single-nucleotide polymorphism) data that was used in the validation of today's genomic panels. Nichols was also integral in the thought process, funding and data collection in developing today's ultrasound technology.

Internationally, Nichols has spread the message and lessons of performance testing, as well as U.S. entrepreneurial spirit, throughout South America, Eastern Europe and Australia.

He has always been youth-oriented, hosting 45 high school, collegiate and foreign interns, as well as hundreds of judging teams and college tours. In addition, Nichols Farms is a frequent tour stop for state cattlemen groups, international delegations and

government officials who seek his knowledge and example of management excellence.

Recently, Nichols was awarded the 2014 NCBA Regional Environmental Stewardship

Award and named the Livestock Publications Council's Headliner of the Year. He serves on the Beef Cattle Efficiency advisory committee and as chairman of the National Beef Cattle Evaluation Consortium. Nichols has been invited to speak on approximately one program a month for 40 years. Nichols Farms has one of the most extensive databases in the industry, with more than 70 computer fields

on each animal, and this database has been used in recent years for genomic validation and U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (USMARC) animal breeding research.

The Saddle & Sirloin Club will honor these and other industry contributions during a special program and portrait unveiling Nov. 15 in conjunction with the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) at the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center in Louisville, Ky.

Supporters may make charitable gifts toward portrait and banquet expenses in Nichols' honor. Donations can be made payable and mailed to your choice of the American Simmental Association at 1 Simmental Way, Bozeman, MT 59715; or the Angus Foundation at 3201 Frederick Ave., Saint Joseph, MO 64506. Contact ASA's Nancy Tom at 210-487-0661 or Angus Foundation President Milford Jenkins at 816-383-5100 to learn more about each respective organization's fundraising goals for the project, which include upcoming auctions of an elite cow from each respective breed donated by Nichols Farms. More information will be released when available.



Dave Nichols

Visit www.livestockexpo.org/ssclub.aspx or watch this video to learn more about the Saddle & Sirloin Gallery.