

Blaine Lotz Takes Title at 51st WLAC

Kansas auctioneers take top two spots in annual world contest in Knoxville, Iowa.

Blaine Lotz of Edna, Kan., proved his world-class talent as a livestock auctioneer at the 51st anniversary of the Livestock Marketing Association (LMA) World Livestock Auctioneer Championship (WLAC) in Knoxville, Iowa, June 21.

Lotz's parents met while his mother was selling cattle and his father was buying them. As a third-generation auctioneer, the world champion was quite familiar with the livestock marketing industry. When he was 15, Lotz attended auctioneering school at Western College of Auctioneering in Billings, Mont., and later received his first full-time job as a livestock auctioneer at the age of 17.

Ultimately, Lotz's favorite part of being a livestock auctioneer is working for consignors to maximize the value of their livestock, their livelihood.

Just a month shy of turning 21, Lotz notes that winning the WLAC is a huge accomplishment and something he has worked toward for a lifetime. During his acceptance speech, Lotz said that he couldn't wait to hit the road representing the LMA and livestock marketing industry.

Lotz was sponsored by South Coffeyville Stockyards Inc., South Coffeyville, Okla.; Fredonia Livestock Auction, Fredonia, Kan.; and Tulsa Stockyards Inc., Tulsa, Okla.

This year's champion takes home a customized 2014 Ford F-150 pickup to use during the year of his reign; \$5,000 cash; a championship sculpture; a world champion Gist belt buckle and a hand-tooled leather briefcase from the LMA; a world champion ring sponsored by Knoxville Regional Livestock Market; the Golden Gavel Award sponsored by the World Wide College of Auctioneering; and a James Reid Ltd. money clip sponsored by www.CattleUSA.com.

Also making a great showing were Preston Smith, Dodge City, Kan., reserve champion, and Brennin Jack, Prince Albert, Sask., runner-up. Smith was sponsored by Winter Livestock Inc., Dodge City, Kan., and Pratt Livestock, Pratt, Kan. As reserve champion, Smith received \$2,000 cash, a Gist knife and



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a reserve champion Gist belt buckle from LMA.

Jack was sponsored by Heartland Livestock Services, Nilsson Bros. Inc. and Direct Livestock Marketing Systems. He will take home \$1,000 cash, a Gist knife and a runner-up Gist belt buckle, sponsored by LMA.

The 2014 Audrey K. Banks "Rookie of the Year" Award winner was Justin Gattey, Consort, Alta., who was sponsored by Vold, Jones & Auction Co. Ltd., Ponoka, Alta.; Blair Vold, Ralph Vold, and Nansen Vold; and Viking Auction Market. Gattey was awarded \$500 cash by LMA, in recognition of an impressive display of talent at his first WLAC competition.

For winning the interview portion of the contest, David Whitaker, Ames, Iowa, was awarded \$1,000 cash and a hand-tooled leather padfolio from the LMA.

The seven remaining 2014 WLAC finalists: Mitch Barthel, Perham, Minn.; Will Epperly, Dunlap, Iowa; Garrett Jones, Los Banos, Calif.; Brandon Neely, Southside, Ala.; Paul Ramirez, Tucson, Ariz.; Russele Sleep, Bedford, Iowa; and Jason Santomaso, Sterling, Colo., all received Gist belt buckles from the LMA.

Each of the 31 semi-finalists received a barbecue set from the LMA and vests, coolers and knives from the host market.

Thirty of the semi-finalists were selected during three quarterfinals that took place during the year at LMA member markets in the United States. The International Auctioneer Champion is always given a "bye" to become an automatic semi-finalist, and Justin Gattey qualified as the champion from the Calgary Stampede in Canada.

When not on the auction block at the livestock markets where he regularly sells, Lotz will travel the country sharing his auctioneering skills with other livestock auction markets, and act as a spokesperson for the industry. Therefore, each semi-finalist had an opportunity to establish their knowledge of the livestock marketing business, and their ability to express that knowledge with clarity, in a judged interview session on Friday of the championship.

The auctioneering phase of the contest is conducted during an actual sale, with live bidders in the seats. Contestants were judged on the clarity of their auction chant; vocal quality; their ability to catch bids and conduct the sale. The final criteria is whether the judge would hire this auctioneer for their own livestock market?

Following the semi-finals, 10 finalists were selected to return to the auction ring for the final round, where they sold more lots of cattle and were judged again based on the same criteria.

A special one-hour highlight show was aired on RFD-TV June 30.

The WLAC highlights the auctioneer's crucial role in the competitive marketing of livestock. LMA hosts the contest each year to promote the auction method of selling livestock; which results in true price discovery of the value of all classes of livestock and sets the cash market for all other methods of selling.

This year's 51st anniversary contest was hosted by Knoxville Regional Livestock Market in Knoxville, Iowa. Attendees had the opportunity to witness a great livestock sale that sold more than 4,000 head of cattle.



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