

Saddle & Sirloin Club Welcomes Dave Nichols

A portrait of the Iowa Angus breeder now hangs in the gallery in Louisville, Ky.

Story & photos by **Jena McReil**, digital editor

Induction into the Saddle & Sirloin Portrait Gallery is the highest honor bestowed in the livestock industry. Founded in 1903, the gallery is the largest collection of noted artists in the world devoted to a single industry. It honors the most influential men and women who have significantly contributed or furthered livestock production.

Angus breeder Dave Nichols, Bridgewater, Iowa, was honored as the 2015 inductee during a ceremony Nov. 15 at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, Ky.

“This is the most humbling experience I’ve had in my lifetime — to be hung in the Saddle & Sirloin Club with those absolute giants of the livestock industry,” Nichols said. “What’s even more rewarding [are] the



letters of support that were written for me, and the gracious and interesting people who have played a part in my life.”

Nichols was raised on his father’s small cattle-feeding operation. Starting as a tenant farm, Nichols Farms has grown under his 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 cooperator 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



► Honoree Dave Nichols stands by his portrait with wife Phyllis and daughter Jennifer.

grand champions. During its 77-year history, all revenue of Nichols Farms has been generated from cattle.

Getting started

With a note from the bank, Nichols purchased his first steer in 1947 at the age of 8. He entered the Angus seedstock business at 13 years of age. 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. He started submitting weaning weights the first year the American Angus Association accepted them, and by 1961 he had bred some of the early Performance Registry International's Certified Meat Sires.

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. He 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. He continues to be a fixture at BIF meetings



► Nichols was nominated by a 17-member committee. Here he stands with (from left) Glen Klippenstein, Robert Hough and James Bennett.

and, for those efforts, received BIF's Continuous Service Award, Seedstock Breeder of the Year award and Pioneer Award.

Nichols currently serves on the American Angus Association's Board of Directors.

"As I page through this history, it really becomes apparent. It's people that make the

difference," Nichols said. "When you get all done, you will not be remembered by what you gathered. You will be remembered for what you scattered."

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

