

Partnering for the Environment

Iowa feedlot wins NCBA Environmental Stewardship Award.

During the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) 2010 Summer Conference, seven cattle operations were recognized for going above and beyond the call of duty for environmental stewardship. From among those seven, Couser Cattle Co., owned by Bill and Nancy Couser, Nevada, Iowa, was named the national winner of the National Cattlemen's Foundation Environmental Stewardship Award Feb. 3 during the Cattle Industry Convention in Denver, Colo.

Through the years, Bill Couser has actively partnered with environmental agencies and universities to use his farm for a number

of sustainability-related research and pilot projects.

"Farmers and ranchers are the very best stewards of the land, but through the partnerships Bill and his family have established, they have set a standard more of us should all strive to achieve. Bill and his family are a perfect example of how important it is to step outside of a comfort zone to make a positive difference in this industry," said Forrest Roberts, NCBA CEO.

"Bill's partnership with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Iowa State University and the

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) resulted in innovative technologies that ultimately led to a very significant reduction in feedlot runoff," he continued. "His efforts not only made his operation more environmentally sound, but also led to improvements throughout the state of Iowa and in the entire country. Developing consensus with environmental groups and government officials isn't easy, but it is necessary in order to achieve commonsense legislation and regulation."

Couser Cattle Co. is a second- and third-generation multifaceted operation that



annually feeds and finishes 5,000-6,000 head of cattle and farms 5,000 acres, producing both corn seed and soybean seed. The business philosophy centers on working to ensure that both profit opportunities and environmental performance are present in cattle and farming operations.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); NCBA; and the National Cattlemen's Foundation.

The award showcases cattle production's compatibility with a clean environment, said John Wallace, representative of Dow AgroSciences, which has sponsored the

NCBA's Environmental Stewardship Award Program (ESAP), now in its 20th year, was created to recognize beef producers who make environmental stewardship a priority on their farms and ranches while they also improve production and profitability. The ESAP award is sponsored by Dow AgroSciences; the USDA's

program for the last 11 years. "These ranchers are outstanding. They not only maintain the land, they improve it. That is true sustainability."

Couser, who was nominated by the Iowa Cattlemen's Association (ICA), has won numerous awards for conservation and community service. He was named as one of 10 People Who Matter by *Time* magazine in 2006. He has been a director of the Story County Cattlemen's Association for 33 years. Additionally, he is chair of ICA's Business Issues Committee and a past vice chairman of NCBA's Animal Health Committee.



Editor's Note: This article is adapted from a news release provided by NCBA.

