

NATIONAL



Herdsman of the Year Awarded

Garrett Lampe, Top Line Farm, wins Herdsman honor from his peers.

Story & photos by **Kasey Brown**, associate editor

A fifth-generation Angus breeder, Garrett Lampe was awarded the Herdsman of the Year honor at the 2014 National Western Stock Show (NWSS) before the grand champion bull was named during the Super-point Roll of Victory (ROV) Angus Show. Each year at the NWSS in Denver, Colo., herdsman from across the country select one of their own to be recognized for their efforts. Fittingly, Lampe was showing in the grand champion lineup when he was announced as the Herdsman winner.

Robin Ruff, director of activities, events and education, commends Lampe, saying, "Garrett is well-deserving of this honor. He has gone above and beyond to build a positive relationship with his customers, both youth and adults. Garrett has always made his showstring a first priority, and that is evident. He always has them looking great — to the best of his ability."

Always a showman

Lampe says his family has had Angus cattle since the 1920s. He was 7 days old when his grandfather bought his life membership, and he was very young when he received his first show heifer from his grandparents.

Showing cattle, and the leadership activities associated with it, gave Lampe a strong foundation in the Angus breed. He was active in the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA), winning the NJAA Outstanding Leadership Award in 2002, and he was the recipient of the first Janet Castle Crystal Award in 1999. The Crystal award is presented to the boy and girl with the highest accumulated points in educational competitions at the National Junior Angus

Show (NJAS). He subsequently won the Crystal Award another three times.

He credits his mom, Anne Lampe, for really letting him develop his love for showing cattle.

"My mom taught me a lot. She hauled my brother and I up and down the road to shows, a lot of times by herself because Dad would stay home to work," he explains. "She took us to tons and tons of shows, so she had



►The Herdsman of the Year is voted on annually at the National Western Stock Show by the Angus exhibitors.

a lot to do with my love of showing. My grandfather was also really big into show cattle. When I was little — before I was in school — we used to go to 10 state fairs a year. This is basically what I grew up doing, and it's all I really know."

Lampe says his dad taught him a strong work ethic and to always give 100% to your way of living. His uncle Casey taught him quite a bit about caring for cattle to the best extent and how to trim hooves.

Lampe attended Butler Community College and was on the judging team, then went to Kansas State University (K-State) for further education. He says he always knew he wanted to work with show cattle.

"I got through college working for different people. I've always known that was what I wanted to do. The day-to-day grind on these show cattle is what I like. It can

►**Left:** Garrett Lampe, Tremont, Ill., was among the showmen in the ring vying for grand champion bull in the NWSS Super-point ROV Angus Show when he was recognized as Herdsman of the Year.

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cause stress and it can be therapeutic all at the same time,” he explains.

Making a living

Showing as a junior member and making a living showing can be two different things, but Lampe has managed to take it to the next level. He was working at Gamble Angus in Tennessee when his favorite heifer was bought by Top Line Farm in Tremont, Ill.

He explains, “It’s pretty evident that was my favorite heifer of all time, and I kind of went with the heifer. I came up here and got their cattle ready for Denver that year. We were lucky enough to win.”

“I just never left. I always tell people that I don’t know if I’ve actually officially been hired,” he jokes.

Top Line wanted to ramp up its showstring, so Lampe was hired full-time. They take 10-20 calves to the major shows around the country, and he says he has anywhere from 20 to 25 head in the barn at home. When it’s fall sale season, there are even more cattle in the show barn, so he stays busy.

For the day-to-day work on the show calves at home, a young man named Lucas helps Lampe in the barn. Three additional guys work on the farm, which makes it possible for Lampe to be gone two to three weeks at a time for shows.

Those who have shown cattle know perfect hair doesn’t just appear on show day, and Lampe says most of his typical day includes washing, blowing and brushing. It is



►A life member of the American Angus Association since he was 7 days old, Lampe has turned a youth activity into a career, managing the show herd for Libby and Tom Mathers of Top Line Farm, Tremont, Ill.

really a team effort with the guys at home, he says. Without their work with cows and calves, it would be really hard to assemble a good showstring.

Top Line Farm sells many show cattle to junior members, and Lampe spends a good deal of time helping those juniors get ready for the shows.

“The junior program is what allows us to do all this stuff. The kids are like little brothers and sisters to me. You spend a lot of time with them,” he says.

“The kid who helps me at home, Lucas, he was a junior who thinks this is a pretty cool thing to do every day. It’s fun that he took an interest in it,” he adds. “I try to be like all the people who took an interest in me when I was growing up.”

Lampe is quick to thank those who have helped him and taught him throughout the years. In addition to his family, he said some of his role models include

Lydell Meier and Chris Johnson at Gamble Angus. He credits a great deal of the way he does things to those two. Johnson has become a really good friend, Lampe says, and he is a great resource whenever he has questions.

He also thanked Libby and Tom Mathers for the opportunity to work with great cattle for the past seven years.

He says he is lucky to have his biggest supporter — his fiancée, Gretchen Frost. He laughs and says she sometimes thinks he’s borderline crazy over his job, but she takes it well.

“She is OK with about 90% of our conversations dealing with the group of cattle I’m working on,” he quipped.

Frost is attending veterinary school at Oklahoma State University. She shows cattle, too, so she understands what he’s doing and helps in the barn when they are together.

Ever humble, Lampe adds, “They say this is an individual award, but it isn’t. The guys who come with me to these shows, they deserve it just as much as I do. They’re the ones who make me look good.

“You can’t win without all of the people who have taught you through the years. This award is a great honor. You look back at the list of the people who have won it — some of those guys I have known and looked up to since I was a little bitty kid. That’s awful neat.”



►Garrett Lampe, Tremont, Ill., was named Herdsman of the Year at the 2014 National Western Stock Show Super-point ROV Angus Show. Pictured are (from left) Miss American Angus Catherine Harward; Garrett Lampe, recipient; and Robin Ruff, American Angus Association director of activities, events and education.