

Environmental Stewardship Award Presented to Minnesota Farm

MSCA President-Elect Rachel Gray and Family Recognized

Article Courtesy of NCBA

SAN ANTONIO, Texas – Little Timber Farms in Blackduck, Minnesota, was recognized on Feb. 4 by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) as a regional winner of the 2024 Environmental Stewardship Award Program (ESAP). Seven regional awards were presented to recipients during CattleCon

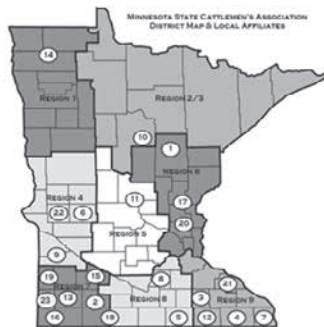
2025 in San Antonio.

"Conservation practices of cattle farmers and ranchers across the country help to preserve natural resources and provide wildlife habitat," said NCBA President Mark Eisele. "The stewardship efforts of these award recipients confirm our industry's commitment to protecting the land and water for future generations."



MSCA

MSCA is a grassroots organization consisting of over 20 local cattlemen's groups, providing the greatest opportunity for producer input and policy recommendations



- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Central Minnesota Cattlemen | 12. Mower County Cattlemen |
| 2. Cottonwood Cattle Producers | 13. Murray County Cattlemen |
| 3. Three Rivers Cattlemen | 14. Northwestern Stockmen |
| 4. Fillmore County Cattlemen | 15. Redwood Area Cattlemen |
| 5. Freeborn County Cattlemen | 16. Rock-Holles Cattlemen |
| 6. Glacier Ridge Cattlemen | 17. Snake River Cattlemen |
| 7. Houston County Cattlemen | 18. South Central Cattlemen |
| 8. Le Sueur County Area Cattlemen | 19. Southeast Cattlemen |
| 9. Midwest Cattlemen | 20. Tri-County Cattlemen |
| 10. Minnesota Cattlemen | 21. Wadena County Cattlemen |
| 11. Mississippi Valley Cattlemen | 22. West Central Cattlemen |
| | 23. Pipestone Cattlemen |

Minnesota State Cattlemen's members, did you know you can pay your local affiliate dues online? Use the link below to renew your membership for the state and local association!

<https://www.mnsca.org/become-a-member/membership-application>

Established in 1991, ESAP celebrates outstanding land stewards in the cattle industry. Regional ESAP winners come from every corner of the country and undertake stewardship efforts unique to their environment, landscape and resources. The 2024 Environmental Stewardship Award Program Regional winners are:

Region I: Angus Glen Farms, LLC, Watkins Glen, New York
 Region II: Kempfer Cattle Company, Deer Park, Florida

Region III: Little Timber Farms, Blackduck, Minnesota

Region IV: Blue Ranch, Moore County, Texas

Region V: LeValley Ranch, Hotchkiss, Colorado

Region VI: Cottonwood Ranch, Wells, Nevada

Region VII: Downey Ranch, Wamego, Kansas

"The efforts made by Little Timber Farms to improve the natural and human resources for the betterment of making conservation easy, affordable and sustainable make them outstanding environmental stewards," said Larry Voltz, retired USDA NRCS dis-

trict conservationist. "In addition, there is never a time when the Gray family turns down the opportunity to share what they are doing for conservation with people in the community."

Located in northern Minnesota, Little Timber Farms is owned and operated by fourth-generation farmer Rachel Gray and her family. Over the years, the farm transitioned from dairy and crop production to cow-calf and the current heifer development operation. Gray recognized that the nutritious grass would benefit growing heifers through effective rotational grazing. The family also takes protecting the Red Lake Watershed seriously as water eventually flows into Hudson Bay. The farm utilizes a nutrient management plan and restricts animal access to water to help protect the vital resource. Due to the family's conservation practices, the farm has become a haven for wildlife and waterfowl, and species diversity has increased. Rachel and her family share a passion for commu-

nicating with the public about farming and ranching through media interviews, Ag in the Classroom activities, speaking engagements and hosting tours.

"I believe raising beef is a privilege because not only do we get to feed people, but we get to make our environment a better place," said Rachel Gray with Little Timber Farms. "I want to know that I made a difference and that my grandchildren have something to come back to."

ESAP is generously sponsored by companies and federal agencies who share the cattle industry's commitment to caring for the environment and protecting natural resources. Sponsors including U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, Corteva Agriscience, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service partner with NCBA to promote environmental stewardship throughout the beef supply chain. For more information, visit www.environmentalstewardship.org.

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**KAITLYN ROOT**

Executive Director
Office: 763-479-1011

Hello, all!

I hope you are staying warm and safe as many of you ap-

proach calving season.

As I am writing this, NCBA CattleCon just wrapped up in Texas, and what an event it was! There is something special about gathering with thousands of individuals united with a common goal of advancing the cattle industry and improving individual operations. This event always reminds me that we are not in this alone – there are so many great individuals out there to collaborate with.

It is so important that we all find something bigger than us to be a part of – maybe for you

that's your church, your school or any other local organization. I find this to be especially crucial for farmers and ranchers. Although I know you all are some of the toughest people out there, a support system makes life less daunting and more enjoyable.

During CattleCon, a presenter spoke about how crucial it is for younger and older generations to work together in order to keep the farming industry alive. The average age of a U.S. farmer is around 58 years old.

Many of you are aware of the increasing age of farmers and the importance of involving the younger generation on the farm. Oftentimes, this means compromising and being open to change for the older generation, and understanding and respecting tradition for the younger generation. It is not always easy, but both generations need to unite in order to propel this way of life we all love so much.

Hope to see you all at our quarterly meeting on March 14 in Luverne!

**JAKE THOMPSON**

President

Greetings fellow cattlemen and cattlemen,

It would appear that winter has found us, as I'm writing this she is a balmy -10 outside, but the temperature doesn't stop Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association from continuously working for you.

So far, this winter has been filled with an array of different speaking engagements from

local annual meetings to UMN Cow/calf Cays to the 2025 National Cattlemen's Beef Association CattleCon in San Antonio, TX.

CattleCon 2025 was a very well attended event where our Executive Director Kaitlyn Root, Glen Graff and myself represented MSCA in various committee meetings. We presented one amendment to a resolution that was passed last year and a new resolution – both dealing with government disaster payments – during the NCBA Agriculture and Food Policy Committee.

MSCA President-Elect Rachel Grey was in attendance with her family to receive the Region 3 Environmental Stewardship Award. Congratulations to Little Timber Farms for this prestigious award and representing Minnesota on the

national front.

Our state legislature has started out a little slowly to say the least. The senate has been functioning with a power sharing agreement to this point with the special election results released that the DFL candidate won the special election. This now gives Democrats a one-seat advantage in the Senate.

The MN House started out slow this year, but democrats and republicans returned to the House floor on Feb. 6 after agreeing on how to organize the House.

High on our priority list for the session is deer and elk depredation, fairness in labeling and feedlot permit updates.

Earlier in January, I gave comments on the Scientific Report of the Dietary Guidelines. I was able to make a

two-minute video to submit to the advisory committee meeting advocating to keep animal protein, specifically beef, as the nutrient dense protein of choice for the guidelines. NCBA will continue to fight to do the same through the rest of the year.

As always, I would like to touch on the importance of your membership. Without producer members throughout the state, this grassroots organization would not carry any weight in any of the conversations that we have locally or on the state or national levels.

Thank you for your voice – encourage others to let their voices be heard. New Producer Members will be eligible to receive a FREE bottle of Eprinex Pour-On through April 1 at \$120 in value.

**ERIC ZELTWANGER**

Vice President

Greetings fellow Cattlemen,

As I write this, I know better days are on the way, at least in the weather department! The weather is -15 degrees, cow-calf guys are preparing to start calving or have already.

Feedlot guys are squeamish wondering if the markets will continue up. Day old calves hit \$1,000 a head.

Cow-calf and stocker operations wonder if they will sell for the record high.

Markets continue to be at all-time highs and records continue to be broken. As far as being in the cattle industry we all say the same thing, WOW! It sure does take a lot of dollars to do this.

We cattlemen just keep on keeping on. Buying feeders and calving out the next year's cattle.

This time of year, we get into bull sale season. I have said it before and I will stick to it, find someone that has the same goals and values in mind as your operation and work with them. Maintain the connection with your seedstock supplier, ask questions and tell them your goals.

We all want the industry

to continue to get better so we can get better. This often happens by having conversations with likeminded people trying to better each other.

That leads me into the wrap up of some very successful events.

We at the MSCA had a great annual meeting in December, we had a great turnout of producers and industry supporters. We had great conversations and passed information on to others.

Also just wrapping up is the NCBA convention. If anyone is looking for a spot to get away and see other producers, a large trade show and some great educational sessions, might I suggest NCBA Convention. Events like this help keep people connected and work-

ing for bigger picture goals.

As we move into spring, I want to put in a BIG plug for another event as a MSCA member. We call it Steak on a Stick!

This event just continues to grow and be a great way to connect REAL producers with the people in government that make the laws we live by. We get a chance to tell our story and make the connection.

So next time they are faced with a question they don't know, maybe they will think about us. Better yet, maybe they remember us and call us to ask! Watch for the date to be confirmed for some time in April!

Til then may your cows be fat and your claws heavy.

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Minnesota Cattleman

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ROSEMARY GUSTAFSON
CattleWomen President

As we enter the new year, the Minnesota CattleWomen have rededicated themselves to educating people of all ages about the cattle industry. We were thrilled to see so many of you at the recent Minnesota Cattle Industry Convention, especially at the CattleWomen's annual meeting in December.

Hats off to all those who planned the annual convention – the roster of speakers was truly impressive. I always enjoy the opportunity to gather with fellow industry members and learn about the latest developments. It's an invaluable chance to stay connected and informed.

The new year commenced in January with our annual audit, budget meeting and strategic planning session held in Aitkin, Minnesota. During this gathering, the board brainstormed innovative ideas to reinvigorate our educational outreach to consumers and develop

practical applications for our producers.

The Minnesota CattleWomen organization recently hosted its first CattleWomen 360 webinar event, titled "By the Numbers: EPDs and other BS." Held on Jan. 30, the webinar featured a presentation by Alaina Mousel that explored the evolution of genetic evaluation in cattle breeding. Mousel delved into the concept of Expected Progeny Differences (EPDs) and emphasized the importance of using EPDs to improve herd performance.

She also provided examples of how to compare different bulls based on their EPDs and selection indexes, while stressing the continued need for physical evaluation of cattle despite the usefulness of EPDs. The webinar recording is now available for replay on the Minnesota CattleWomen website.

The second webinar is scheduled for April 10, with the topic "Grazing from the Ground Up: Common Issues in Pasture Systems and Management Strategies."

This event will feature Sabrina Claeys and Mae Petrehn, grazing biologists from Ducks Unlimited, who will discuss common problems in pasture systems and share practical management solutions. Attendees are encouraged to bring

their grazing-related questions and concerns, as this webinar promises to provide valuable insights before the upcoming grass turnout season. Registration is open on the Minnesota CattleWomen website up until the day of the event.

The Minnesota State Beef Ambassador team has participated in the University of Minnesota's Cow/Calf Beef Days across the state. The team is also slated to travel to Kimball, Minnesota, to attend the annual Schiefelbein Farms tours and bull sale, where they look forward to experiencing all aspects of a seedstock operation.

The ambassadors would like to extend a heartfelt thank you

Thank you, 2025 Beef Alliance Members

THANK YOU to the following businesses that have committed to support members of the Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association as a part of the Minnesota Beef Alliance Program for 2025. If you are interested in learning more about the Beef Alliance program, contact Angie Ford at mnsccamembership@gmail.com.

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Presidential

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Wieser Concrete Products



* Indicates giving above base level for that category!

to Jennifer Schiefelbein, who graciously welcomed the team to last year's farm tour, provided captivating educational talks and has once again extended this valuable opportunity to the current ambassador group.

Continuing their efforts to promote beef education, the Ambassadors are planning the Second Annual Young Adult Education Day on April 5. This immersive event, titled "Feeding the Future: Cattle Nutrition for Young Farmers" promises to be a fun experience for all attendees. Watch for sign up opportunities – last year's session sold out! For the latest updates on the

activities and initiatives of the MN Beef Ambassador team, be sure to follow their Instagram or Facebook account, [@mnbeefambassadors](https://www.instagram.com/mnbeefambassadors).

We continue to work on enhancing our website to include additional content to add value for our membership. If you haven't logged in for a while, check it out!

Our newsletters are available online, as well as all events and calendars. Follow us on Facebook or Instagram on [@MNCattleWomen](https://www.facebook.com/MNCattleWomen) and on our website at <https://www.mncattlewomen.org/>.

Excited to see what 2025 holds for our industry!

Upcoming Events/Important Dates:

For more details on events listed below, visit www.mnsca.org.

Friday, March 14 – MSCA Quarterly Meeting – 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Take 16 Brewing, Luverne, MN

Monday, July 14 – MSCA Quarterly Meeting – Time TBD, Little Falls, MN

Tuesday, July 15 – Summer Tour – Little Falls, MN

Dec. 5-6, 2025 – Minnesota Cattle Industry Convention and Trade Show – River's Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud, MN



RACHEL GRAY
President-Elect

This year we attended the 2025 Cattle Convention in San Antonio, Texas, as a family. What a fun and exciting time.

Seven of us traveled together, including Jaxon, who is four, and Audrey, who is seven. I would recommend adding San Antonio to your list of places to see. There were numerous activities and sights, and the weather was excellent.

We were able to see the zoo, the Alamo and of course the cattle convention was the highlight of the week. We attended general sessions, learned about the industry and caught presentations in the Learning Lounge. The trade show was informative,

showcasing new innovations in the cattle industry. I am excited about the company RanchBot. They have some options for remote watering monitors that we will be implementing this summer.

We were honored to be selected as the Region 3 Environmental Stewardship Award winner. Attending the conference as a family and receiving this award is a highlight of my farming career. We hope to continue to promote the excellent work that cattle men and women do throughout our region and the U.S.

Of course, we made it home just in time to be welcomed by the very cold weather and cattle that are ready to calve. We are about to start calving 100 heifers.

It is always an exciting time when the calves start to make their appearance. This year we are making sure that we have extra deep bedding and several indoor pens available as the weather is looking cold for the near future.

I hope that you have an easy calving season with calves that come easily and weather the cooperates.

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Prime Promoter of the Year



Every year at the Minnesota Cattle Industry Convention, the Minnesota Beef Council announces the winner of the Prime Promoter award. This year's convention was held December 6th – 7th at River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud, Minnesota. The Prime Promoter Award was started in 2017 by the Minnesota Beef Council and the Beef Checkoff Program and is given to recognize any group or organization who performs outstanding promotion of beef throughout the year. Winners of the Prime Promoter Award are provided with a plaque and \$500 to go towards beef promotions. This year's recipient of the award was Three Rivers Cattlemen's Association.

Three Rivers Cattlemen's is an active, local affiliate cattlemen's organization. The association encompasses Dodge, Goodhue,

and Olmstead county, as well as other surrounding counties. The group regularly goes above-and-beyond to assist in promoting beef. As a nonprofit organization, they promote and provide education to youth, public, and its beef producers about cow/calf and feedlot production, cooking, and nutritional information on beef. The association gives back to youth organizations such as 4-H and FFA through supporting the beef project in each county that has members. Additionally, they provide a youth scholarship to a high school senior or freshman pursuing college education in agriculture. Serving beef extensively throughout the region is also something the Three River's Cattlemen's Association believes in and facilitates. Of these events is the Burger Barn at the Goodhue County Fair where one of

their feature items is the "Raging Bull Burger," providing a t-shirt to customers who order it along with selling beef seasoning. Other events the association grills at includes the Goodhue Family Fun Fest, AGR North Star Classic Cattle Show, and the association's annual meeting.

Present at the convention to receive the award on behalf of the entire Three River's Cattlemen's Association were Amanda Armstrong and Carl Sackreiter, both beef producers and members of the organization holding leadership positions. Carl is a cow/calf and feedlot producer as well as a nutritionist for a local co-op, serving as the President of Three Rivers Cattlemen's. "We're very honored to receive the Prime Promoter Award," said Sackreiter. "Our association has been around since 1989 and continues to support the beef industry by promoting and providing education to our producers and consumers."

Three Rivers Cattlemen's has an active social media presence and uses the platform to educate others on the many benefits of beef, including pertinent topics from both the Minnesota Beef Council and the Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association. To follow along with activities of this association, follow them on Facebook at Three Rivers Cattlemen. For more information on the Minnesota Beef Council, visit mnbeef.org.

Elk River Build Your Base

The 2024 football season has ended, and Elk River High School has claimed the title of the 2024 State Class 5A Football Champions. Elk River football participates in the Build Your Base program through the Minnesota Beef Council. Build Your Base is a comprehensive sports nutrition program that features beef as its premier protein source. Through nutrition education, along with providing pre/post-game beef team meals and beef jerky, athletes and their families are better equipped for a successful sports season.

The Build Your Base program was started by the South Dakota Beef Industry Council in 2017 and in partnership with Sanford

Health and the Sanford Sports Science Institute. The Minnesota Beef Council has implemented the program in the state since 2022. Elk River High School joined the Build Your Base program this past summer in an effort to increase the nutrition for their athletes, specifically in the football program. They utilize the program through nutrition education, team meals with beef, and beef jerky to fuel and recover from workouts.

"One of the greatest factors in our success is having talented athletes that were willing to train all year to achieve their goals," stated Steve Hamilton, Elk River Head Coach. "Proper nutrition in the off season as well as dur-

ing the season played a key role in their development. We were able to help prevent injuries and almost totally eliminated cramping in our program."

Elk River football has a history of competing in the state tournament, winning championship titles in 2016, 2022, and now in 2024. The team beat Andover in the section finals to advance to the state tournament. At state, they defeated Monticello and Chanhassen, placing them in the finals, eventually beating Alexandria 33-24 to claim the State Championship title. Steve commented, "Becoming State Champs is a dream come true. It is the ultimate goal for every player and coach that participates

Top of the Class



The mission of the Top of the Class program is to greater develop the skills of Minnesota's beef industry leaders to maximize their impact and effectiveness in local, state, national, and international arenas. The program is a dynamic, year-long educational experience featuring two separate in-state seminars along with an out-of-state experience in Colorado. The members of the current Top of the Class program completed their second session in Denver, Colorado January 7 – 10, 2025.

While in Denver, the class learned through a variety of meetings about the structure, history, and mission of the Cattlemen's Beef Board and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. The group also heard from the Issues Management Team and received a tour of the Digital Command

Center (DCC), which monitors relevant beef information from the media around the clock. Other important areas of focus included compliance of the checkoff, the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF), and media training.

One of the major highlights of the Denver trip for Top of the Class is getting to visit Five Rivers Cattle Feeding, a large feedlot in Kersey, Colorado. Participants were able to learn about the history of the feedlot and how their operation runs along with touring their facility. They also traveled to Cargill Meat Solutions in Fort Morgan, Colorado for a tour of the packing plant (pictured), getting to see the efficiencies of a plant who processes thousands of head of cattle every day.

The third and final Top of the Class session will be held March 5 – 6, 2025 in Minnesota.

MBC Board Meeting

The next Minnesota Beef Council Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 21 – Tuesday, April 22, 2025. The meeting will be held at the Minnesota Beef Council office in Maple Plain, MN.

Minnesota Beef Council Events

March 5 – 6, 2025 | Top of the Class Session #3 (Maple Plain, MN)

March 6, 2025 | MN Ag Event at AFSA High School (Vadnais Heights, MN)

March 13 – 15, 2025 | Minnesota Association of Meat Processors Convention (St. Cloud, MN)

April 11, 2025 | Minnesota Academy of Nutrition Dietetics Conference (Eagan, MN)



ELK RIVER HIGH SCHOOL

2024 STATE CLASS 5A CHAMPS

in football. It is an extremely satisfying feeling knowing that all the work and dedication by the players and coaches helped

to lead to this unbelievable accomplishment!" To learn more about Build Your Base, visit buildyourbase.org.

Choice Cuts

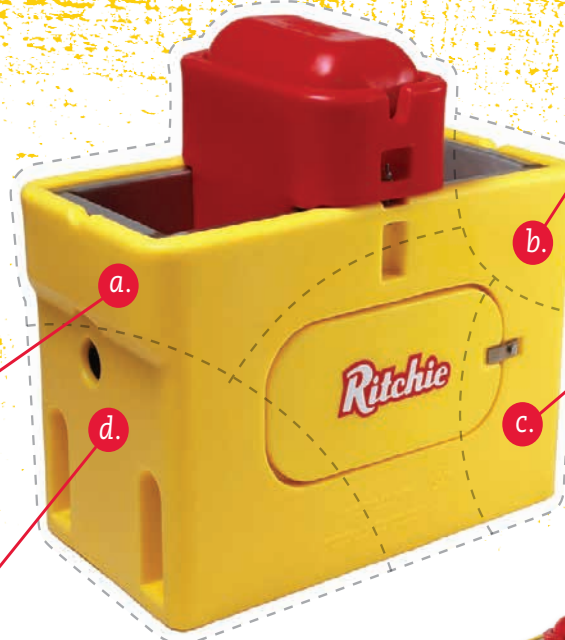
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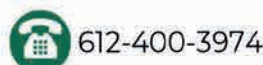
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MSCA Leaders Represent Minnesota Cattle Producers in San Antonio



MSCA President Jake Thompson presents a resolution regarding emergency relief programs during the Ag and Food Policy Committee meeting at the 2025 NCBA CattleCon in San Antonio, Texas.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association held the 2025 CattleCon in San Antonio, Texas, Feb. 3-6. MSCA leaders including MSCA President Jake Thompson, MSCA President-Elect Rachel Gray, MSCA Executive Director Kaitlyn Root and MSCA member Glen Graff attended to represent Minnesota cattle producers.

Jake presented a new resolution during the Ag and Food Policy Committee meeting. The resolution is titled, "Government Disaster Programs." The resolution states that, "NCBA recommends that crops that do not count towards base acres should not penalize a producer in emergency programs." MSCA brought this resolution forward with concerns over uninsured alfalfa negatively affecting producers' emergency relief payments in certain

programs.

Jake also brought forward an amendment to a disaster payments resolution which Minnesota passed last year at CattleCon. The amendment states, "When disaster assistance

payments are made through a USDA program, if incorrect payments are made to the producer, a producer should not be assessed penalties or interest on the returned payment."

These resolutions passed and

will be discussed and voted on once again during NCBA's Summer Business Meeting in July.

This highlights the grassroots efforts that guide both the MSCA and NCBA.



Minnesotans pictured at the 2025 NCBA CattleCon in San Antonio, Texas.

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Hoge Awarded Cattleman of the Year

The Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association (MSCA) awarded Kevin Hoge of Aitkin, Minnesota, as the 2024 Cattleman of the Year during the Minnesota Cattle Industry Convention in St. Cloud on Dec. 06.

Each year, the MSCA recognizes a cattleman that has made a positive and lasting contribution to Minnesota's cattle community. The Minnesota Cattleman of the Year award recognizes a strong record of active promotion of the beef industry and a willingness to speak out publicly on behalf of the industry, as well as active participation in and support of the MSCA.

Kevin was born and raised on a small dairy and hog farm in Aitkin County which was established as Flat Rock Farm after marrying his wife Carol in 1981.

In the early 80s, Kevin began pasturing yearling calves for the summers. In 1986, the first bred Hereford heifers were purchased. Over time, the commercial cow/calf herd has evolved into an Angus Gelbvieh cross.

While working for Minnesota Department of Transportation for 30 plus years, Kevin always said he was a two-day a week farmer, but now that he is retired, he can farm seven days a week.

Kevin began an artificial

insemination program in the mid 90s, and now all cows are synchronized and artificially inseminated once and then a clean-up bull is used.

In the early 2000s, Kevin began grouping calves with other local producers and selling in larger groups to feedlots. For the last 10 years, he has retained ownership of his own calves, and they have been sent to feedlots in Kansas, Nebraska and currently to a feedlot in Lamberton, Minnesota.

Kevin has been a dedicated member of the cattle industry for many years. He became a member of several local cattlemen's groups through the years, including his local association, the Central Minnesota Cattlemen's Association, which he is the current president of.

In 1988, he joined the MSCA and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, and he has remained an active member ever since.

Kevin served as MSCA Region Six Director for two terms in the mid 90s. In around 2007, he became secretary for the organization, and he is still holding that position to this day.

During Kevin's 30-plus years as a MSCA member, he has attended almost every annual Minnesota Cattle Industry Convention and Summer Tour, as well as

MSCA quarterly meetings.

In 2003, Kevin and Carol were named Farm Family of the year for Aitkin County, and in 2021, their farm became a Century Farm.

Aside from cattlemen's organizations, he is also a member of the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation, Minnesota Farmers Union, St. James Catholic Church, Dam Lake Sportsman's Club, Friends of Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Aitkin County FFA Alumni Association and Aitkin County High School Agriculture Advisory Board. Kevin is also a mentor for the Aitkin County 4-H Beef Project.

Kevin believes that membership in the MSCA isn't an option for farmers and ranchers, but that it should be a requirement. MSCA and NCBA have become important organizations to him, his family and the ranching operation.

He always says the money spent on membership is well worth it to always have someone staying up to date on the current issues and watching out for the beef industry.

Kevin has a contagious laugh that keeps MSCA Board Members positive during even the toughest of times, and he is a crucial part of the Cattlemen's team.



Cattleman of the Year – Kevin Hoge was awarded as the 2024 Minnesota Cattleman of the Year during the Minnesota Cattle Industry Convention.

Merck Receives Beef Industry Service Award



Merck Animal Health was recognized as the 2024 Minnesota Beef Industry Service award winners during the Minnesota Cattle Industry Convention. Merck donated \$10,000 to the MSCA through the "Cartridges for Cash" program in 2024.

Merck Animal Health was awarded as the 2024 Minnesota Beef Industry Service Award recipients during the Minnesota Cattle Industry Convention on Dec. 6 in St. Cloud, Minnesota. This award is presented by the Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association (MSCA), and the purpose of the award is to recognize an individual, business or organization that has demonstrated support to grow Minnesota's cattle industry or community.

The beef industry in Minnesota depends on the support of agricultural businesses and organizations for the advancement of the industry. The Minnesota Beef Industry Service Award serves as an avenue for MSCA to recognize and thank these groups for their efforts in Minnesota.

MSCA has a longstanding partnership with Merck Animal Health through the "Cartridges for Cash" program. This partnership began in the 80s' and since 2020, Merck has donated over \$40,000 to the MSCA through the program. Merck Animal Health is one of the highest Prime Beef Alliance sponsors of the MSCA.

"Merck Animal Health is proud to support the beef cattle industry through our partnership with the Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association," says Anna Haas, senior sales representative with Merck Animal Health. "The Cartridges for Cash program enables us to pay it forward by supporting the next generation of cattle producers through youth educational programs and scholarships."

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NEWS BRIEFS

Cattle and Bison Imports from Mexico Resume Under New Protocol

Protocols ensure safe movement of animals while mitigating the threat of New World Screwworm

WASHINGTON, D.C., Feb. 1, 2025 – The United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is announcing the resumption of cattle and bison imports from Mexico. Imports are scheduled to resume within the next several days.

To protect U.S. livestock and other animals, APHIS halted shipments of Mexican cattle and bison in November 2024 after a positive detection of New World screwworm (NWS) in southern Mexico. After extensive discussions between representatives from the countries, APHIS and Mexico agreed to and implemented a comprehensive pre-clearance inspection and treatment protocol to ensure safe movement and mitigate the threat of NWS.

APHIS' top priority is to protect American livestock from foreign pests. As part of the protocol signed between the countries, Mexico identified and prepared pre-export inspection pens in San Jeronimo, Chihuahua and Agua Prieta, Sonora, which APHIS has now visited, inspected and approved. Cattle and bison will be inspected and treated for screwworm by trained and authorized veterinarians prior to entering the pre-export inspection pens, where they will again undergo inspection by Mexican officials before proceeding to final APHIS inspection then crossing at the Santa Teresa and Douglas Ports of Entry, respectively. Cattle and bison approved for importation will also be dipped in a solution to ensure they are otherwise insect- and tick-free. The United States and Mexico are working closely to approve additional pre-export inspection pens and reopen trade through other ports of entry.

To support efforts to keep NWS out of the United States, APHIS will continue working with partners in Mexico and Central America to eradicate NWS from the affected areas and to reestablish the biological barrier in Panama, which we have worked to maintain since 2006.

In the last two years, screwworm has spread north of the barrier throughout Panama and into Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Belize and now Mexico. This increase is due to multiple factors including new areas of farming in previous barrier regions for fly control and increased cattle movements into the region. APHIS is releasing sterile flies through aerial and ground release at strategic locations, focusing on Southern Mexico and other areas throughout Central America. A complete list of regions APHIS recognizes as affected by screwworm as well as more detailed information on trade restrictions can be found on the USDA APHIS Animal Health Status of Regions website.

NCBA Seeks Interns for Summer 2025

CENTENNIAL, Colo. – On Jan. 23, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) announced applications for two internship opportunities available summer 2025, a public policy internship based in Washington, D.C. and a meetings and events internship based in Centennial, Colorado.

The public policy internship is held in conjunction

with the Public Lands Council (PLC) and interns will have the opportunity to work on government advocacy projects that advance NCBA's and PLC's policy priorities. Interns will participate in research, monitor federal regulations and congressional activity, and participate in meetings with policy stakeholders.

The meetings and events internship will give students an opportunity to learn about managing public events including logistics, marketing, venue coordination, and budgeting. Meetings and events interns will assist in the planning of NCBA's annual Summer Business Meeting and CattleCon.

Both internships will run from May 19, 2025, through Aug. 15, 2025. Applicants must have a minimum GPA of 3.0, be junior or senior undergraduate students or graduate students and be available for the duration of the internship. For more information and to complete an application, visit ncba.org.

Farm Transition Retreats Available For Farmers

Multigenerational Farm Transition Retreats are available for Minnesota farmers considering farm transition or succession plans. These retreats are offered by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) in partnership with the University of Minnesota (UMN) Extension, and the Southern Agricultural Center for Excellence.

Attendees will be guided through hands-on planning and discussion on farm transition for the whole farm family; all generations actively involved in the farm are encouraged to attend. Topics covered in detail will include family and business goals, job responsibilities, financial needs of farm and families, inheritance considerations, and mechanisms of transfer.

These events are free of charge and are being held in three different locations; farmers can choose the one most convenient for them. Attendees should plan on attending both days.

CITY DATES AND TIMES

Mankato	Friday, February 21, 5 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Saturday, February 22, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
St. Cloud	Friday, March 7, 5 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Saturday, March 8, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Rochester	Friday, March 21, 5:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Saturday, March 22, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Registration is available online by visiting the MDA website; event address and further meeting details will be provided in the registration confirmation.

Educational resources on farm transition and estate planning are available on the UMN Extension website. For questions or comments, contact Nathan Hulin at huli0013@umn.edu or 218-828-2680.

Cattle Producers Pleased by Withdrawal of Anti-Free Market USDA Rule

WASHINGTON (January 14, 2025) – The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) welcomed the withdrawal of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) proposed rule entitled "Fair and Competitive Livestock and Poultry Markets," announced on Jan. 14 by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. This harmful regulation would have dismantled current cattle marketing agreements, reversed decades of innovation in the cattle industry, and threatened producer profitability.

"Under the 'Bidenomics' agenda, USDA pushed regulations like this one which would have under-

mined the free market, harmed hardworking cattle producers, and far exceeded the agency's authority granted by Congress," said NCBA Executive Director of Government Affairs Tanner Beymer. "We are pleased that USDA recognized their failed approach and withdrew this rule. NCBA will continue advocating for sound market principles and we look forward to working with the next Administration on enhancing profitability opportunities for America's cattle farmers and ranchers."

Nebraska Cattleman Becomes New NCBA President

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (Feb. 6, 2025) – Buck Wehrbein, a Nebraska cattleman, ascended to the role of NCBA president during CattleCon 2025, held the first week of February in San Antonio, Texas. Wehrbein, with a 45-year career in the cattle feeding sector, brings decades of dedication to the industry and leadership experience to NCBA's top leadership post.

The 2025 NCBA officer team, approved by the NCBA board of directors, took office at the end of this year's convention. Gene Copenhagen of Virginia was named president-elect and Kim Brackett of Idaho was elected vice president. Skye Krebs of Oregon was elected chair of the NCBA Policy Division and Kenny Rogers of Colorado was elected policy vice chair. Nancy Jackson of Mississippi and Travis Maddock of North Dakota were elected as chair and vice chair of the NCBA Federation Division, respectively. Brad Hastings of Texas will continue to serve in the role of NCBA treasurer.

As president, Wehrbein sees both challenges and opportunities ahead, but he's confident that NCBA's unifying presence will remain critical to addressing key issues facing farmers and ranchers. He is particularly passionate about fostering opportunity for the next generation of cattle producers, recognizing their ability to drive innovation and industry progress. "They're ahead of where we were in my time," he noted. "They understand the issues, and they're ready to make a difference."

Wehrbein's focus during his time as president is to advocate for profit opportunities while also strengthening the freedom to operate. Securing tax relief provisions and pushing back on regulatory overreach is also crucial during the year ahead.

"The tax issue is critically important for agriculture," Wehrbein said. "A few years ago, there was talk of doing away with the deduction of expenses, and that would have been devastating. We also have to keep pushing on the Death Tax. With what land values have done, if families are forced to sell or split up land to pay taxes, it would put a lot of people out of business."

For Wehrbein, leadership is guided by faith, family, and vocation. A devout Christian, he credits his faith with providing direction and strength throughout his career and in raising his family. Married to his wife Sandy for more than 52 years, Wehrbein cherishes the support of his family, including his two daughters, seven grandchildren, and ten great-grandchildren. He looks forward to the year ahead, working with NCBA members toward a stronger, more viable future.

"The overarching principle and aim of NCBA is to make things better for our members and create an environment where each of us focus on our farms and ranches," Wehrbein explained. "That's a big strength of NCBA—we're not just big feedlots or big ranches. We're everybody," Wehrbein said.

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NEWS BRIEFS

NCBA Announces 2025 Policy Priorities

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (February 5, 2025) – During the first week of February, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association's (NCBA) Executive Committee approved the organization's policy priorities at CattleCon 2025. This year the focus will be on engaging with the Trump Administration and Congress to expand opportunities for producer profitability.

"NCBA will continue advocating for passage of a long-term Farm Bill and pushing to extend the critical tax provisions in the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, that expire at the end of the year. We will also be continuing to fight for more flexibility for grazing and voluntary conservation work that is vital to preventing catastrophic wildfires that have been raging across the

country," said NCBA President-Elect and Nebraska cattleman Buck Wehrbein. "Over the past few years producers have been increasingly squeezed by onerous regulatory burdens, including unscientific Endangered Species Act listings and the rapidly changing enforcement of the Corporate Transparency Act. This government overreach has prevented meaningful conservation efforts, leaving America's treasured natural resources in worse condition and has left cattle producers in a position of great uncertainty, with soaring legal and accounting bills. NCBA is laser-focused on advancing federal policies that will help improve the general business climate and give producers more opportunities moving forward to increase the profitability of their operations."

Some of NCBA's 2025 Policy Priorities include:
Work to retain core wins in the 2024 House Agri-

culture Committee-passed Farm Bill.

Preserve family farms and ranches for future generations by advocating for essential tax relief for cattle producers.

Fight for meaningful long-term relief from the burdensome reporting requirements of the Corporate Transparency Act.

Enhance wildfire prevention utilizing targeted grazing, controlled burns, and forest management practices to protect grazing lands.

Keep working lands working by protecting family farms from undue regulatory burdens under the Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and many other key regulations.

Visit <https://www.ncba.org/Media/NCBAorg/Docs/2025-policy-priorities.pdf> to view the full list of priorities.

Annual Cattle Convention Reflects on Past Year

The Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association (MSCA) hosted our annual Minnesota Cattle Industry Convention Dec. 6-7 at the River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud, Minnesota. This year's convention surrounded the theme of "Stronger Together," which MSCA Executive Director Kaitlyn Root says is the ultimate theme of the cattle industry.

"When I look back at this year and think of all the issues cattlemen and cattlemen faced in Minnesota and across the country, including attacks on the Beef Checkoff, natural disasters, animal activist threats and Farm Bill negotiations, I ultimately think about how we work together in this industry to unite around one common goal," Root says. "This convention is the perfect time to reflect on the accomplishments, as well as the downfalls, of 2024 and look towards this next year with excitement."

The convention kicked off Dec. 5 with the Resolutions Meeting where members gathered to discuss resolutions which guide the MSCA in its decision-making process. This is a grassroots process where local members bring resolutions forward. After being voted on and passed by the committee, resolutions are then voted on by the entire membership during the annual meeting.

Topics covered by new resolutions passed include government land acquisitions, green energy projects, government disaster programs, tariffs, pesticide restrictions and elk populations/transfer of elk.

Friday and Saturday included excellent presentations on "Right Way, Right Time. Cull Cow Management," an overview on the Beef Checkoff and return of investment on the checkoff dollar, a National Cattlemen's Beef Association policy update, a state legislative update, an update from the American National CattleWomen and presentations on hay testing and sustainable opportunities in the beef industry.

During the banquet Friday evening, outstanding leaders in the cattle industry were recognized.

Kevin Hoge was awarded as the 2024 Minnesota Cattleman of the Year, recognizing his outstanding dedication to and involvement with the MSCA. Hoge serves as the secretary of the association.

Merck Animal Health received the 2024 Industry Service Award which showcases Merck's continued support of the MSCA throughout the years. Merck has donated nearly \$45,000 to the MSCA since 2020 through their Cartridges for Cash program and support the MSCA through the Beef



Cattlemen's Beef Board CEO Greg Hanes speaks to the audience about the Beef Checkoff.



Andrew Revier, of Olivia, Minnesota, was awarded the \$500 Dennis Bottem scholarship at the 2024 Minnesota Cattle Industry Convention.

Alliance program.

Andrew Revier, of Olivia, MN, was awarded the \$500 Dennis Bottem scholarship, and Taylor Ford, of Lake Wilson, Minnesota, was awarded the \$500 Reid Mason scholarship. Both

attend South Dakota State University.

The Minnesota Beef Council awarded Three Rivers Cattlemen, one of 21 local affiliates of the MSCA, with the Prime Promoter of the Year award.



Members gather at the Resolutions Meeting prior to convention to discuss policy and pass resolutions which guide the MSCA in decision making processes.



Jared Sherlock entertains the crowd with hilarious magic during the Best of Beef Banquet at the Minnesota Cattle Industry Convention.

Meet the Newly Elected MSCA BOD Members



Chris Miller, MSCA Region 9 Director

I am Chris Miller from Mabel, located in the corner of southeast Minnesota. I farm in partnership with my parents, Larry & Margaret, operating Miller's Viewlawn Farms.

We have raised purebred angus cattle since 1903 selling private treaty stock. We have diversified our farm with a flock of purebred Suffolk sheep and custom raising pigs. I am blessed to have the support of my wife, Melissa, and three sons, Colton (22), Cooper (10) and Cody (8). The boys, along with my four nephews, are the sixth generation raising angus and the eighth generation cultivating our soils.

As we live on State Line Road and have land in Min-

nesota and Iowa, my family and I have always been active in organizations in both states. Some of these include past board member of the Iowa Angus Association and Extension Committee member and currently serving as the Mabel-Canton School Board Chairman, Fillmore County Cattlemen Secretary, Beef PDC Committee and now Region 9 Director for the Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association.

Being a member of MSCA for many years since graduating college, it felt like now was the time to get more involved with MSCA to help grow membership and help prevent overregulation of the best protein on the market – beef.



Dallas Knobloch, MSCA Feeder Chair

I am Dallas Knobloch, a cattle feeder from southwest Minnesota, located near Hills. My family and I live and work on the farm that I grew up on. My wife is Amy, and she keeps the finances, all things organized and offers a helping hand wherever needed.

We have two children, a son Tory, and a daughter Claire. Tory was married this past spring to Sadie, and he started full time at the family operation after 2.5 years of school and trucking.

Claire is a junior in high school and participates in volleyball, basketball, 4-H and many other things. She loves to show cattle and the challenge to make the state fair.

I started farming with my

dad on an acreage across the road from the feedyard. I started with a few stock cows and grew that to about 120 cows and have maintained that ever since. I began to keep my own calves and feed them out and then slowly began buying a few more feeders to fatten each year.

We have the home feedyard and work with other neighbors where we feed cattle at and run feed each day to them with our truck. We sell majority of our cattle to Upper Iowa Beef and try to keep a steady flow of fat cattle going each month.

Our family is very passionate about the beef industry and I'm looking forward to serving on the Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association Board of Directors.



Ryan Vos, MSCA Region 7 Director

Hi everyone, my name is Ryan Vos, I am a fifth-generation grain and cattle producer from Hadley, Minnesota. I graduated from Murray County Central High School in 2015 and decided to continue my education by attending South Dakota State University and obtained a degree in agriculture science.

I currently farm with my dad and brother full time along with being a morning show host on our local radio station, KJOE 106.1, based out of Slayton.

Within our operation, my family feeds out about 2,000 steers per year through our three feedlot sites. My wife and I run a small herd of registered Hereford cattle and are actively becoming more involved within the seed-

stock industry, as well as our state breed association where we will be serving as the secretary/ treasurer.

You may have heard my voice on the Linder Farm Network as I give monthly agriculture updates. Since starting the morning show, every Friday we interview or highlight different people involved in the cattle industry, ranging from cattle producers themselves to NCBA Board members.

This role gives me the opportunity to meet various people within the agriculture community, especially the cattle industry.

I have been a board member of the Murray County Cattlemen's Association and am excited to take the next step into being the MSCA Region 7 Director.



Eric Nolte, MSCA Region 2/3 Director

Greetings!

I would like to take the opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Eric Nolte, and I am from north central Minnesota.

I farm alongside my family – we run a seedstock herd, commercial cow/calf

and a garbage business. I have been part of our local cattlemen's association for the last few years and now serve as the vice president. I am looking forward to serving as the MSCA Region 2/3 Director.



Dustin Wiese, MSCA Cow/Calf Chair

As ranchers near Pequot Lakes, Minnesota, my wife Katie and I are proudly raising the fifth generation of ranchers with our four boys: Owen (9), Levi (7), Derek (3) and Andrew (1).

Working with my brother Cody and sister Amy on our family ranch, we raise registered angus cattle. This year we are proud to be hosting our 50th Annual Production Sale in May. Additionally, we manufacture and sell Ag-Strike post pounders along with other fencing

supplies.

As I look to the future, I see a dire need for involvement with the Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association. With less than two percent of the world population involved in agriculture, we have a small voice, but united we have a strong voice.

My involvement today will secure the future of agriculture for my children. As MSCA Cow/calf Chair I look forward to representing the cow/calf producers of Minnesota.



Ruth Hoefs, MSCA Region 8 Director

I am a farm girl at heart. I grew up on a dairy farm in Le Sueur County. I showed dairy cattle at our local fair in 4-H alongside of my brother.

After my divorce, I moved back to the farm I grew up on and finished the feedlot project that was started, with the help of my fiancé Ron. We had dairy steers back on the place in 2000.

About four years ago, Ron's nephew took over leasing the feedlot and Ron and I just have a small herd of beef cows that we calf once a year.

My love for animals and

being able to educate and help others understand the beef industry along with promoting the beef industry is very important.

I am also involved with Ducks Unlimited. Ducks Unlimited is working with farmers on grazing programs for the acres of grass land that have been conserved. This is both good for the beef industry, wildlife and nature.

We as board members need to educate the public and encourage the generations younger than us and help mentor them to be our next voice in the beef industry.



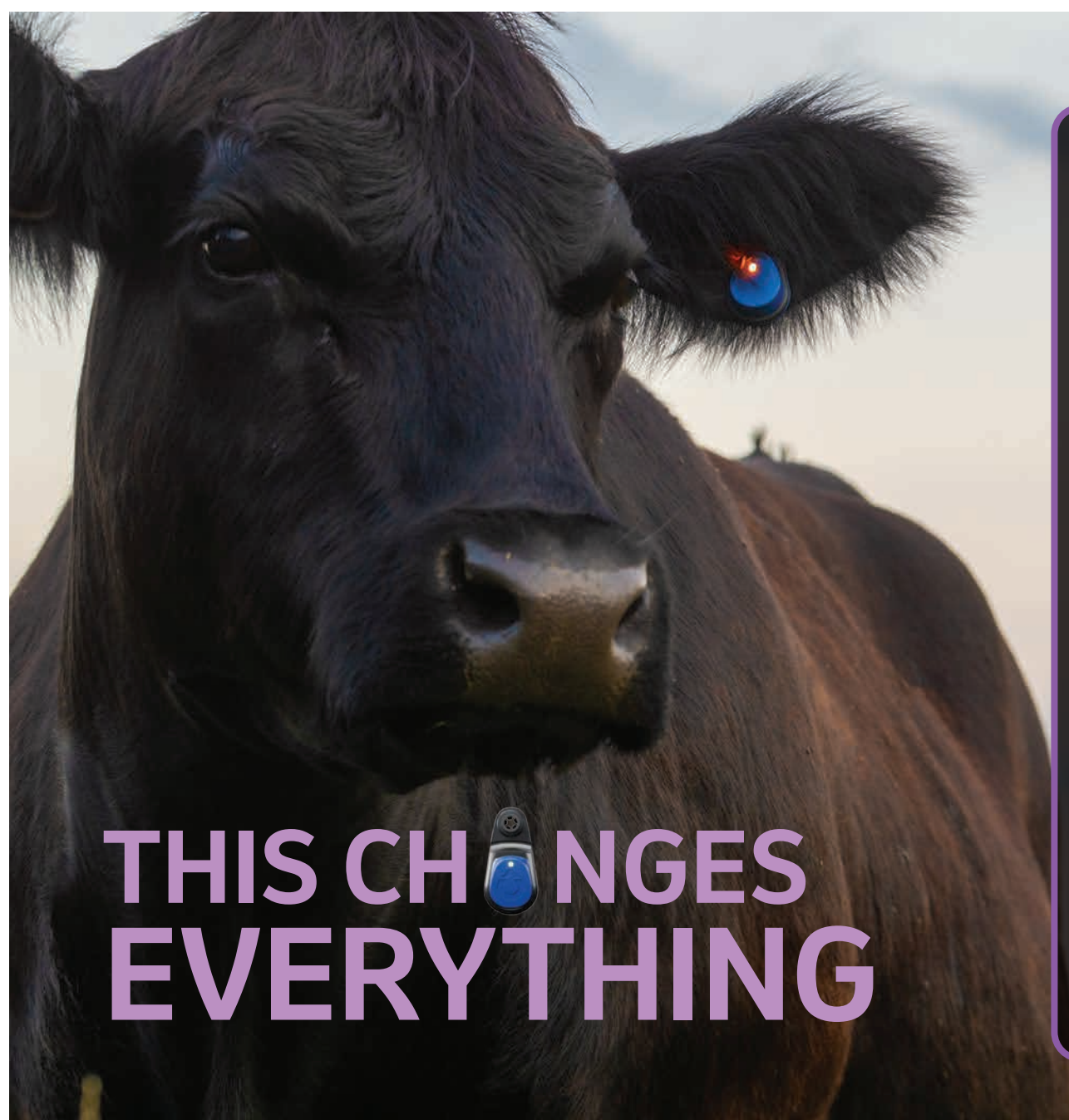
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Dawn and Grant Breitkreutz Receive Minnesota Leopold Conservation Award

Article originally published by Sand County Foundation

Grant Breitkreutz, MSCA past president, and his wife Dawn, of Redwood Falls have been selected as the recipients of the inaugural Minnesota Leopold Conservation Award. The award honors farmers, ranchers and forestland owners who go above and beyond in their management of soil health, water quality and wildlife habitat on working land.

The Breitkreutzes, who own and operate Stoney Creek Farm, were presented with the \$10,000 award at the Premier Soil Health Event in Mankato.

Sand County Foundation and national sponsor American Farmland Trust present Leopold Conservation Awards to private landowners in 28 states. In Minnesota, the \$10,000 award is presented with state partners Minnesota Soil Health Coalition and Soil Regen, and the MSCA is one of many sponsors.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the award recognizes landowners who inspire others with their dedication to environmental improvement. In his influential 1949 book, *A Sand County Almanac*, Leopold called for “a land ethic,” an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage.

Earlier this year, Minnesota landowners were encouraged to apply, or be nominated, for the award. MSCA nominated Grant and Dawn. Applications were reviewed by an independent panel of agricultural and conservation leaders from Minnesota.

Dawn and Grant Breitkreutz know about taking chances.

Converting their conventional cow-calf, row-crop farm into a regenerative agriculture showcase didn’t happen overnight nor without risk. Yet they say their farm’s survival once depended on it.

Shortly after taking over Grant’s family farm in 1996, crop yields were failing, and cattle health was declining. This prompted the Breitkreutzes to begin exploring a more sustainable approach to raising cattle and crops. They began to see that focusing on growing healthy soil would lead to healthy air, water, livestock and wildlife.

However, their initial attempts at soil health practices were questioned by some friends and family.

“We were at the edge of quitting,” Dawn recalls. “And then the ‘teachers’ began appearing in our path,” she said. As their circle of friends and mentors expanded around the globe, the acreage and herd size at Stoney Creek Farm grew as well.

Today they manage 1,759 acres across Redwood and Renville counties where diverse crop rotations of corn, soybeans, oats, cereal rye and alfalfa are grown with a cover crop and no-till system. About 100 head of red angus cow-calf pairs are rotationally grazed on 675 acres of pasture and fields of cover crops throughout the year. About half of the pasture was converted from cropland, with the rest being remnant prairie.

The Breitkreutzes are pioneers of a prescribed



Grant and Dawn Breitkreutz of Redwood Falls were recognized as the inaugural Minnesota Leopold Conservation Award winners in December. Grant and Dawn are pictured with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen.

and adaptive grazing system that reduces the need for cropping inputs while increasing forage production and pounds of beef raised per acre.

For more information on the Leopold Conservation Award, visit sandcountyfoundation.org.



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Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Type Ops: ☐ Feeder ☐ Cow-Calf ☐ Seedstock ☐ Stocker ☐ Dairy ☐ Associate

Method of Payment: ☐ Check ☐ Credit Card ☐ Invoice Me

Credit Card Type: ☐ Master Card ☐ Visa ☐ Discover

Card # _____

Expiration Date ____/____/____ Signature _____

Make Checks Payable to: "MSCA" (No Cash Please)

Return Form & Payment To: MSCA Treasurer

PO Box 12, Maple Plain, MN 55359

Recruited By: _____

Questions Call: ☎ (763) 479-1011 or email: ✉ mnsca@mnsca.org

MN State Cattlemen's Association Dues \$100

Junior Dues \$25

Local Cattleman Association Dues (Optional)

Contact your local association to join

NCBA Membership Dues (Optional)

(Select the appropriate classification and add to MN State Cattlemen dues)

1-100 - \$170

101-250 - \$340

251-500 - \$510

501-750 - \$736

751-1000 - \$1,020

1001 - 1250 - \$1,304

1251 - 1500 - \$1,586

1501 - 1750 - \$1,870

1751 - 2000 - \$2,154

Stocker/feeder - \$170 + (\$0.4307/hd) =

Associate Dues

Individual - \$170

Business - \$226

Student (24 or younger) - \$56

(NCBA Dues →) _____

Total Dues Enclosed This Membership _____