



*"Serving Michigan's Cattlemen Since 1960"*

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## **MICHIGAN CATTLEMEN RECOGNIZE INDUSTRY LEADERS**

OKEMOS - (June 25, 2016) –Distinguished individuals and businesses were recognized for their contributions and dedication to the cattle industry during the [Michigan Cattlemen's Association](#) (MCA) Summer Round-Up in West Branch. MCA "Member of the Year" was awarded to Kevin Wernette of Remus; "Agribusiness of the Year" belongs to JBS USA; Kristina VanOrder of Hamilton was awarded "Young Producer of the Year"; Kevin Beckington of Merritt received "Purebred Breeder of the Year"; "Cattle Businessman of the Year" was awarded to DeLong Cattle Co. of Cass City, and Dr. Kent Ames of Michigan State University's College of Veterinary Medicine was recognized for dedicated service to Michigan's cattle industry.

### **Member of the Year**

The Michigan Cattlemen's Association's "Member of the Year" is Kevin Wernette. Kevin has been raising cattle for 40 years, first with his father and brothers, now with his son, Karl. Kevin and Karl operate Wernette Cattle Company LLC, which consists of 165 cow calf pairs, 200 stocker cattle, and 45 replacement heifers. In addition, Wernette Cattle Co. is an order buyer and backgrounder for a feedlot. The company also markets grass-fed and grain-finished beef under their own Wernette Beef brand. Kevin is a strong supporter of the Michigan Cattlemen's Association. He has served on the MCA Board of Directors for over 15 years and served as president of the Association from 2012-2013. Under Kevin's leadership, MCA started a feeder cattle vaccination program and the association became active in the MI Alliance for Animal Agriculture.

### **Agribusiness of the Year**

The Michigan Cattlemen's Association awarded the distinction of "Agribusiness of the Year" to JBS USA. JBS USA is the North American arm of JBS® S.A., the world's leading animal protein processor. The JBS, Plainwell, MI facility began operation in 1918 under the Murray Packing Co. In 2010, the facility joined the JBS USA family. The Plainwell plant is one of the few plants which produce ground beef patties. More than 1 million lbs. of beef are produced each day and the plant has a daily processing capacity of 1,700 head.

### **Young Producer of the Year**

The Michigan Cattlemen's Association awarded the "Young Producer of the Year" honor to Kristina VanOrder of Hamilton. Kristina is very involved with Michigan's Cattle Industry. She serves as a board member of the Michigan Chi Association, Secretary of the Maine Anjou Association of Michigan and the Maine Anjou representative for the Michigan Beef Expo, board member and Treasurer of the Michigan Junior Livestock Society, and a 4-H leader for Allegan County. The VanOrder family is

very active in showing cattle at several shows throughout the State of Michigan, such as the Michigan Winter Classic, Michigan Beef Expo, Michigan Beef Showcase, and other 4-H shows.

### **Purebred Breeder of the Year**

The Michigan Cattlemen's Association awarded Kevin Beckington of KB Farms the honor of "Purebred Breeder of the Year." Located in Merritt, KB Farms started in the Angus business in 2006 with 8 heifers and a bull. It now consists of 120 registered Angus cattle. KB Farms has been committed to continually improving the genetic base of the herd by using DNA testing and 95% AI & embryo transfers. Emphasis is placed on calving ease, rapid growth and carcass genetics in a sound functional phenotype that will move the beef industry forward and improve the profits of their customers. KB Angus consigned the top indexing bull in the MCA/MSU Bull Evaluation in 2016, the top selling Angus open heifer at the Michigan Beef Expo in 2015 and has had similar success at sales in Indiana, Kentucky and the Midland Bull Test in Montana.

### **Cattle Businessman of the Year**

The Michigan Cattlemen's Association selected DeLong Cattle Company as "MCA Cattle Businessman of the Year." DeLong Cattle Co. is a multi-generational seed stock operation ran by Bob and Kathy DeLong, along with their daughter Kate (Jeremy) and son Joe (Kayla). There are four grandchildren Caiden, Breslyn, Jenisyn, and Zachary. The operation consists of 340 acres of mostly pasture in the Thumb area. There are Simmental, Angus, Chi-Maine, Charolais, and Herefords representing 120-140 cow/calf pairs. They show and sell purebreds, show heifers, and breeding bulls all year long. Bob DeLong is a Trustee for the Michigan Simmental Association and the Simmental representative for the Michigan Beef Expo.

### **Dedicated Service Award**

In recognition of his dedicated service to Michigan's cattle industry, the Michigan Cattlemen's Association presented Dr. Kent Ames with a special appreciation award at the 2016 Summer Round-Up. Dr. Ames' career in academia began at Michigan State University in 1977. Although he has been involved with over 90 research projects, he found his niche in food animal surgery and teaching. Dr. Ames has taught more than a dozen courses ranging from basic animal science and anatomy to ethics, problem solving and surgery. He has developed and taught new courses at MSU at the graduate, professional and undergraduate levels. Dr. Ames is a past president of the American Association of Bovine Practitioners and worked in the US senate for one year as an American Veterinary Medical Association congressional science fellow.

The Michigan Cattlemen's Association is an affiliate of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and represents all segments of the beef cattle industry including cattle breeders, commercial producers and cattle feeders. MCA is a grassroots policy development organization for the beef business. Through the Michigan Cattlemen's Association, cattle producers work to create a positive business environment, while providing consumers with a safe and wholesome product.

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**Photos and Captions Below:**



**Member of the Year**

Kevin Wenette (l) was awarded MCA Member of the Year, presented by Director David Girton.



**Cattle Businessman of the Year**

Bob DeLong of DeLong Cattle Co. was awarded MCA Cattle Businessman of the Year presented by Director Brian Plank.



**Agri-Business of the Year**

Travis Schunk (rt) of JBS USA received the MCA Agribusiness of the Year award presented by Director Dale Oeschger.



**Dedicated Service Award**

Dr. Kent Ames (r) was recognized by MCA Director Brian Plank for dedicated service to Michigan's cattle industry.



**Young Producer of the Year**

Kristina VanOrder was awarded MCA Young Producer of the Year, presented by MCA President Carl VanderKolk.



**Purebred Breeder of the Year**

Kevin Beckington received MCA's Purebred Breeder of the Year, presented by Director Monte Bordner (r) and Alden Gonder of Falmouth Co-op (l).