

Opportunity is Knocking for Michigan Cattlemen

'When Opportunity Knocks' was the theme of the 2011 Michigan Cattlemen's Association Summer Round-Up, held July 8-9 in Mt. Pleasant MI. Cattlemen and agribusinesses from across the state gathered to renew old friendships, create new ones and prepare for new opportunities in agriculture and the cattle business.

The Round-Up educational program featured three speakers; Keith Creagh, Director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Steve Williams, Director of Cattle Procurement with JBS and Daren Williams, Director of Communications for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. The common theme throughout the program was taking advantage of your opportunity when it comes knocking. With a new administration running Michigan's state government, a packing plant in Michigan aggressively seeking a reliable supply of cattle, and a state and national association that is helping farmers and ranchers tell their story and build beef demand, opportunities are certainly knocking for Michigan Cattlemen.

The Round-Up banquet speaker was NCBA President Bill Donald from Montana. Bill discussed the challenges that cattlemen across the country are faced with and highlighted what NCBA is doing to alleviate those challenges. The following individuals were then recognized for their contribution to the cattle industry in Michigan and their ability to convert challenges into opportunities.

Nevill Supply Agribusiness of the Year



Don Nevill is a strong advocate of membership in the Michigan Cattlemen's Association. A member of both MCA and NCBA himself, he knows and promotes the value of belonging. Nevill Supply annually sponsors new member gift certificates at the Michigan Beef Expo, where Nevill Supply is a regular exhibitor. The Nevill family is best known for quality fencing supplies, a reputation they have built through years in the fencing business.

"I was 14 before I learned that they make new fence staples," Don jokes recalling working to straighten bent fence staples as a child. A quest to simplify fence building led Don to develop the self-propelled one man post driver. Suddenly, a lot of neighbors wanted posts driven in. Needing a source for post, wire and gates, Don and Deb started buying extra and soon they were fence supply retailers. In 2004, they invested in a post peeler and began to manufacture wood post. Before long, they were distributing post throughout the Midwest and Canada.

Don, Deb and their son Andy now own and operate Nevill Supply Inc. Located in Clare, they are ideally suited to provide fencing solutions to Michigan's cattle industry. They handle a full line of agricultural fencing, livestock equipment, watering supplies, baler twine and many other livestock related items. Most products sold by Nevill Supply are used on their own farm which continues to grow with a cow calf herd, feedlot and hay and grain sales. The farming operation allows the Nevills to describe firsthand how the products they sell perform on the farm.

What started as an adolescent's chore has turned into a thriving family business for the Nevills. Don credits the business's success to the help and support of his parents, Bill and Leona, Uncle Ron and longtime employee Ralph Diehl, along with an exceptional crew of past and present employees.



Dr. Jeannine Schwehofer **Young Member of the Year**

Jeannine P. Schwehofer, Ph.D., is employed with MSU Extension as the Meat Quality Extension Educator and is an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Animal Science at MSU. Previously she served as the Livestock Extension Educator for the Thumb and Saginaw Valley areas of Michigan working mainly with beef feedlots. She and her husband, Ryan, farm together between Richmond and St. Clair, with Ryan's parents. They raise corn, soybeans, wheat, and hay, and have a small beef feedlot.

Jeannine helps Ryan operate Schwehofer Seed Sales LLC, providing seed and crop protection products to area farmers. In addition, she continues to assist her parents, Jerry and Lynne, with their farming operation.

Jeannine (Grobbe) Schwehofer grew up on a small livestock and grain farm in Richmond, Michigan. Her passion for the beef industry started when she showed steers in 4-H. She attended Michigan State University and received her B.S. in animal science. While at MSU, she was a member of the 2000 Meat and 2001 Livestock Judging Teams. Jeannine attended Kansas State University and received her M.S. and Ph.D. in meat science, investigating the effects of modified atmosphere packaging systems on meat color and quality.

Jeannine is an active member and advocate of the Michigan Cattlemen's Association. She conducted an education seminar at the 2009 MCA Summer Round-Up, demonstrating the effects of injection enhancement on beef quality. She recently returned from the NCBA Young Cattlemen's Conference where she spoke with Michigan's legislators on behalf of MCA.



Dave Stough **Purebred Breeder of the Year**

Dave Stough grew up in Southeastern Pennsylvania and earned a Bachelor's of Science degree in Animal Science from Penn State and went on to earn a Master's of Agriculture under Dr. Herman Purdy.

He moved to Michigan in 1978 and worked in partnership with John Calendar of Single Tree Farms.

In 1984, Dave started Stough Simmentals in Charlotte, MI and began managing cattle sales around the country. He managed the Ohio Beef Expo and helped bring the beef expo concept to Michigan, serving as a founding member of the Michigan Beef Expo. He has continued to serve on the Beef Expo Committee, as a Director of the Michigan Simmental Association, and as a representative of the Simmental breed on the MCA Bull Test Committee. Dave also coached the Michigan Junior Simmental Association Judging Team, winning a national championship.

In 2005, Stough Simmentals moved from Charlotte to Union City and in June 2011 it moved again to Marshall. Dave's goal is to produce bulls that commercial cattlemen can use profitably. Dave holds annual sales at the farm selling bulls, breeding stock and show heifers.

Dave and Christine have been married for 43 years. Together they raised three children; Greta, Jann and Marshal. He and Christine hope to grow the herd and continue providing quality Simmental genetics to the commercial cattle industry. They welcome visitors to the farm at any time.



Brian Plank

Member of the Year

Brian's interest in the cattle industry began with a 4-H project and has become his passion and livelihood. He now runs 60 Simmental and Simm Angus cows, is employed as an Area Representative for Genex Cooperative, Inc., and he manages the MCA/MSU Bull Test Station.

Brian's work is essential to the success of the bull test. In addition to his daily management responsibilities, Brian works with consignors to ensure that all requirements are met. He assists MSU faculty in collecting data on the bulls and develops firsthand knowledge of each bull during the course of the test. Brian's familiarity with each bull's genetics and performance is of great value to bull test consignors and buyers. In the weeks leading up to the sale, Brian spends a great deal of time on the phone talking with perspective buyers and marketing the bulls.

Wanting to see youth have the same opportunities that he did, Brian is very supportive of youth 4-H cattle projects. Brian was awarded MCA Young Cattleman of the Year in 2005 and continues to be an active contributor to the association. He is on the MCA Board of Directors and has previously served on the MCA Feeder Calf Sale Committee and as MCA's representative on the MDA's TB Advisory Committee. In addition, Brian is a Director and past President of the Michigan Simmental Association. Brian holds an annual production sale at his farm in Crystal.



Earl Souva

Cattle Businessman of the Year

In 1995, Earl and Melissa Souva started Great Lakes Sire Service (GLSS) offering custom semen cryopreservation for beef, dairy, and cervidae species. GLSS began as a mobile lab providing strictly on-farm collection and freezing services. Today they have a permanent facility that can safely house and handle bulls of all size. Their services have expanded to include breeding soundness exams, semen collection & processing as well as semen storage & shipment.

Business opportunities for Michigan Cattlemen have expanded with the growth of GLSS. In January of 2001 GLSS became CSS health certified. Certified semen services (CSS), a subsidiary of National Association of Animal Breeders provides auditing services to ensure the health and identity of semen processed by its 33 member organizations. With no other CSS participants in Michigan, producers now have the opportunity to offer their customers semen processed under stringent health standards. Since the outbreak of bovine tuberculosis in Michigan, interstate animal movement has been restricted. Commercial AI studs and progressive cattlemen marketing semen can now have semen collected in Michigan and shipped anywhere, including many foreign countries.

Earl is a Director of MCA and is a strong supporter of enhancing business opportunities for Michigan cattlemen. His work to educate producers on collection and artificial insemination technology continues to increase the quality and value of cattle in Michigan. Earl and Melissa have 4 children who also like to work around the business and raise 4-H projects.