

# BIF HONORS

## Angus breeders among those honored by the Beef Improvement Federation at annual event.

**T**he Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) recognized multiple individuals during the 2021 BIF Annual Research Symposium & Convention hosted June 22-25 in Des Moines, Iowa.

### Commercial winner

BIF named W&S Ranch Inc. the 2021 BIF Commercial Producer of the Year. The ranch is a registered Angus and commercial ranch located near Smith Center, Kan. It includes more than 6,000 acres of owned and leased land on which the Weltmer family grazes a commercial cow herd; a small, registered Angus herd; a feedyard and a farming operation with corn, soybeans and wheat.

The commercial and registered cow herds total 180 cows. All females are bred by artificial insemination (AI) using Angus or SimAngus genetics followed by Angus cleanup bulls. Cows are bred to calve between Jan. 20 and March 1. AI and a tight calving window allow calves to be finished in the family's feedyard as a more uniform cohort, then be processed at 13½ months of age.

W&S Ranch emphasizes improved genetics and profit-proven outcomes. All segments of the business are evaluated to improve efficiency and effectiveness to maintain a viable operation for generations to come.

### Seedstock winner

Cow Camp Ranch was named Seedstock Producer of the Year. The ranch is located on the western edge of the Flint Hills near Lost Springs, Kan. The Brunner family has been farming and ranching since the early 1890s, and now is in its fifth

generation of operation on some of the same land.

The registered cow herd was founded in 1969 by Kent Brunner using some of the original Simmental genetics imported into the United States. Today, the ranch is managed by Kent and his son, Nolan.

The herd consists of 800 registered Simmental, SimAngus and Angus cows managed on native Flint Hills grass year-round.

The family markets about 250 bulls each year, with the majority sold through an annual spring bull sale. A select group of females are marketed at the time, with the balance sold private treaty.

In addition to the seedstock operation, the Brunner family owns and operates a 9,000-head commercial feedyard managed by Kent's brothers, Mark and Tracy Brunner.

### Pioneers

BIF presented three Pioneer Awards to recognize individuals who have made lasting contributions to the improvement of beef cattle.

**GENE ROUSE**, Huxley, Iowa, and **DOYLE WILSON**, Boone, Iowa. The pair's collaborative research and development of real-time ultrasound technology to evaluate body composition in the live animal, and the application of this technology in the form of performance measurements and expected progeny differences (EPDs), have had a profound effect on the beef industry. Their contributions were amplified through the leadership they provided to many graduate students; breed associations; and industry partners, including BIF.

**GALEN FINK**, Randolph, Kan. A family operation, Fink Beef Genetics is one of the leading Angus and Charolais seedstock operations in the country. With extensive use of AI, a large embryo transplant (ET) program, sexed semen and widespread use of cooperative herds, the operation has been able to grow numbers with a limited land base and very little equipment or hired labor. Balance and cow sense are the hallmarks of the Fink program. Fink was a pioneer offering a three-year guarantee on feet and semen checks.

**ALISON VAN EENENNAAM**, Davis, Calif. Throughout her career Van Eenennaam has proven to be an ardent communicator of science

to perhaps the broadest audience of any extension specialist in memory. Through her past work with the National Beef Cattle Evaluation Consortium (NBCEC) in "validating" commercially available DNA tests to her more recent work related to gene editing in livestock, she has

shown that she is not afraid to tackle politically charged issues. Her academic career has generated 110 peer-reviewed manuscripts, 700 invited talks, and \$15 million in extramural support for research and outreach benefiting agriculture.

### Continuing Service

BIF presented **JANE PARISH**, Verona, Miss., and **LEE LEACHMAN**, Fort Collins, Colo., its Continuing Service Award, recognizing major contributions to the organization.

Parish currently serves as department head for the North Mississippi Research and Extension Center in Verona, Miss., and interim head for the Mississippi State University (MSU) Department of Animal and Dairy Sciences. She served as BIF executive director for five years.

Applied research has been the theme and center for much of Parish's career as a professor and extension professional at MSU. She has proven tremendous breadth and diversity in her approach to helping producers be more successful, authoring research papers in reproduction, genetics, cattle management and forage utilization.

Leachman, who served as the 2018-2019 BIF president, is the managing partner of Leachman Cattle of Colorado (LCoC), headquartered near Fort Collins. He sells more than 2,500 bulls annually and works with a network of more than 40 cooperating herds. He has built a program based on improved feed efficiency, quality, productivity and carcass value to increase profit for the industry. He started \$Profit, a private genetic evaluation that calculates and provides EPDs and selection indexes.

### Scholarship winners

**MACI MUELLER**, Davis, Calif., received the Baker/Cundiff Award. The annual Frank Baker/Larry Cundiff Beef Improvement Essay Contest recognizes outstanding graduate student research and competitive writing.



W&S Ranch, Smith Center, Kan., was named the 2021 BIF Commercial Producer of the Year. Pictured are (from left) Philip, Kaylee and Jessica Weltmer of W&S Ranch; and Joe Mushrush, 2020-21 BIF president, presenting.

*Continued on page 88*

Mueller, originally from Princeton, Neb., is working on her doctorate at the University of California–Davis. Her essay was titled “Gene Editing as a Tool for Genetic Improvement of Beef Cattle.”

Mueller’s essay is posted to [www.BIFconference.com](http://www.BIFconference.com).

**EVA HINRICHSEN**, Westmoreland, Kan., and **GESSICA FRANCO**, College Station, Texas, were awarded Roy A. Wallace Memorial Scholarships.

Hinrichsen is this year’s undergraduate winner. She currently attends Oklahoma State University (OSU), where she majors in animal science.

Receiving the graduate student award, Franco is currently working on a doctorate in physiology of reproduction at Texas A&M University. She currently works



Left: Gene Rouse (left), Huxley, Iowa, and Doyle Wilson (center), Boone, Iowa, receive the BIF Pioneer Award presented by Scott Greiner, extension beef specialist and professor at Virginia Tech.

Right: Galen Fink (center), Randolph, Kan., receives the BIF Pioneer Award. Presenting the award are Joe Mushrush (left), 2020-2021 BIF president, and David Nichols, professor at Kansas State University.



Lee Leachman (center), Fort Collins, Colo., receives the BIF Continuing Service Award from Donnell Brown (right), Throckmorton, Texas. Also pictured is Lee’s wife, Lisa.

with Ky Pohler researching the traditional view of male effects on pregnancy outcomes in cattle and the significant effect it has on improving the sire fertility evaluation system.

### Ambassador

BIF presented the eBEEF Team its Ambassador Award, which recognizes efforts in spreading the news of BIF and its principles to a larger audience. The eBeef Team consists of Darrh Bullock, University of Kentucky; Jared Decker, University of Missouri; Megan Rolf, Kansas State

University; Matt Spangler, University of Nebraska–Lincoln; Van Eenennaam; and Bob Weaber, Kansas State University.

The eBEEF team is a group of beef geneticist and genomics-focused extension professionals. Their mission is to foster a research and outreach community, engage beef cattle producers and ag professionals through trainings and publications, while supporting research and outreach projects.

Angus Media provides comprehensive coverage of the

2021 symposium online at [www.BIFconference.com](http://www.BIFconference.com). |

Editor’s note: This article was compiled from multiple news releases provided by BIF, all of which can be found on the Awards page at [www.BIFconference.com](http://www.BIFconference.com).