



For immediate release

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Stockmen's Association names Effertz Key Ranch as Rancher of the Year

The North Dakota Stockmen's Association (NDSA) will recognize Effertz Key Ranch of Velva, N.D., and the Gerald "Pat" and Loretta Effertz family as North Dakota's Ranchers of the Year during the association's annual convention and trade show, Sept. 23-25 at the Holiday Inn in Minot, N.D.

"What makes this ranching family so interesting is their unwavering commitment to making the beef industry better at every link in the production chain, from cow-calf producers all the way through to the retailers," said NDSA Director Gabe Thompson, Jr., of Antler. "They've not only introduced a new breed of cattle to the nation, they've actively embraced new technologies that will move our industry forward."

In the 1970's, Effertz Key Ranch was one of three progressive cattle producers – Gerald "Pat" Effertz of Velva, Neal Feist of Velva and Roy Moore of Phoenix, Ariz. – to import the first Salers bull into the United States.

"It is certainly fair to say that Jet's genetics have made a great contribution to the breed," said ASA Director of Communications Joe McDaniel, who added that many descendants within the Salers registry trace back to the memorable bull.

In the early years, Effertz Key Ranch played an instrumental role in promoting the breed by showing Salers cattle at all the major livestock exhibitions from Houston, Texas, to the Canadian Western Agribition in Regina, Sask., and from the Cow Palace in San Francisco, Calif., to the National Western Stock Show, where it has exhibited numerous grand and reserve champions.

Today, the ranch is playing an active role in promoting the breed through genetic research.

Gerald and Loretta's son, Roger, explained. "Although we immediately liked how the Salers calves performed at birth, it took a few years to know much about the breed's carcass quality, mothering ability and other important traits."

They liked what they had learned, but wanted to know more. Faster.

Through the use of DNA testing, the Effertz family is working with a Canadian DNA testing firm to study the effects of Leptin on feed efficiency and carcass quality. Leptin, a protein hormone, is thought to affect feed intake and body composition in mammals.

“The research has demonstrated a \$20 to \$40 difference in the value of cattle that carry Leptin markers versus the ones that don’t carry the markers,” explained Roger. The added value is realized in fewer days on feed and more consistency in the carcass quality at harvest time. This summer, using DNA and an ultrasound test to measure backfat, Effertz Key Ranch had one pen of calves that were marked for harvest after just 67 days on a finishing ration, compared to the typical 120 days.

“This family has a steadfast belief that we can’t always rely on what has been done in the past; that we must continually look for ways to build value in what we produce. They’ve led by example,” concluded Thompson.

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