

Members will select two officers, six directors to lead organization

Candidates' Forum to be held Oct. 9, election Oct. 10

NDSA members will elect leaders during the 91st annual Convention & Trade Show in Bismarck next month. Two officers and six directors will be elected.

The NDSA Board of Directors nominated the officer candidates. The NDSA District Nominating Committees nominated the director candidates.

Nominees will be presented at the convention's opening session Oct. 9. Nominations from the floor will also be accepted at this session and precede the Candidates' Forum, where candidates will introduce themselves and answer impromptu questions. Voting will occur during the closing session of the annual meeting; however, votes may be cast at any time after nominations close and ballots are printed, if members are unable to attend the closing session.

Following are biographies of each candidate, as well as their answers to the following: "2020 has delivered its share of challenges to North Dakota cattle ranchers. What immediate action steps do you think the industry should pursue to improve the plight of its producers?"

President:

Jeff Schafer, New Rockford

Family: Wife Leann, children Chelsey (Kyle) Erdmann, Colten and Corey and grandson Cade Erdmann.

NDSA involvement: Schafer is a 31-year NDSA member who is currently serving as vice president. Previously, he also served on the NDSA Board of Directors, NDSA Budget Committee, NDSA Resolutions Committee, NDSA Brand Board, where he was the chairman, and the NDSA Research & Education Committee, where he was vice chairman. Schafer has also participated in the Young Cattlemen's Legislative Conference, Beyond the Bunk Workshop and Military Appreciation Day. He has hosted and attended the Spring Roundups and the Feedlot Tour.

Operation: Schafer's Rhein Valley Farm is a sixth-generation operation, with three of those generations currently operating the diversified farm and ranch. It is comprised of a 400-head Angus cow-calf operation and a 999-head backgrounding and finishing feedlot for owned and purchased cattle. Schafers also finish feeder pigs for the fall market and raise corn, soybeans, pinto beans and seed oats. They also use cover crops and residue grazing for their cattle enterprises.

Off-farm business: Schafers are full-service Purina dealers with bulk and bag products and a feed mill.



Jeff Schafer

Education: He earned a bachelor's degree in animal science from North Dakota State University (NDSU).

Other ag involvement: Schafer is a past president and current member of the Wells County Farm Bureau, a past member of the Bremen/Barlow Elevator boards, a past board member of Wells County Better Seed and Grain and a current board member of the NDSU Animal Science Education Foundation.

Community involvement: Schafer is the past president of the Wells County 4-H Council and the St. Joseph and St. John Church Parish Councils. He is a past New Rockford Economic Development board member.

Awards and recognition: Schafer was honored with the Wells County Soil Conservation Award in 2008 and the Harvest Bowl's Wells County Award in 2013.

Answer: "Price discovery has been and continues to be a challenge within our industry. With the renewal of Mandatory Price Reporting, we need to advocate for greater participation amongst the packers. We need to know the final price, not just the base price. Information is key to making marketing decisions, and we, as beef producers, need timely and accurate price information."

Vice President:

Jason Leiseth, Arnegard

Family: Wife Peggy, children Erik (Fallon), Brady and Tyler and grandson Banks.

NDSA involvement: Leiseth is a 33-year NDSA member. He serves on the Resolutions Committee. He served on the NDSA board from 2007 to 2015. He served on the NDSA Brand Board and the District 5 Nominating Committee and was the past chairman and vice chairman of the Feeding & Marketing Committee. He has attended the conventions, Spring Roundups and All Breeds Cattle Tour.

Operation: Leiseth operates a commercial Red Angus cow-calf operation and raises small grains and hay.

Education: Leiseth earned a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics from NDSU.

Other ag involvement: Leiseth has been a member of the Horizon Resources Cooperative board for 12 years and is currently serving as its secretary. He also served on the North Dakota Game and Fish Department Advisory Board from 2009 to 2017, serving four years as chairman.

Community involvement: Leiseth is a member of the McKenzie County 4-H Livestock Committee.

Awards and recognition: Jason and Peggy Leiseth



Jason Leiseth

were the 2019 NDSU Harvest Bowl's McKenzie County honorees.

Answer: "We need to continue working with our legislators and industry partners to secure the aid and programs for producers to survive in the short term. We also need to maintain our long-term efforts to improve price discovery, trade and product demand, so our industry will be better positioned to prosper post-pandemic."

District 1:

Justin Maddock, Maddock

Family: Wife Rachel and children Hailey, Logan, Kaitlyn, Jaycee, Graden and Clayton.

NDSA involvement: Maddock is a 15-year NDSA member. He has attended the annual conventions, Spring Roundups, Feedlot Tours and All Breeds Cattle Tour. He is currently a District 1 director and is serving on the Brand Board.



Justin Maddock

Operation: He manages a cow-calf operation with his father and brothers. The family often backgrounds its own calves until spring. He also develops heifers for the family's herd, has a small brood of Quarter Horse mares and manages a small farming operation, raising hay and cover crops for the cattle enterprise and wheat and soybeans as cash crops.

Off-farm business: He previously served as a field investigator for the North Dakota Department of Health and the North Dakota Department of Agriculture's Animal Health Division.

Education: Maddock earned a bachelor's degree in animal science at NDSU.

Other ag involvement: Maddock is a North Dakota Grazing Lands Coalition board member and mentor, a member of the FFA Alumni Association and an American Quarter Horse Association member.

Community involvement: Maddock is a board member and past chairman of North Viking Church and a past chairman of the Benson County Rodeo Association. He serves on the Maddock Community Center Board, the Maddock Public School Board and the Benson County 4-H Achievement Days Council.

Awards and recognition: The family's ranch received the NDSA's Environmental Stewardship Award in 2014.

Answer: "I believe the NDSA is taking the steps needed to improve our ability to market by pushing for early price discovery from the packing plants. This will put feedlots at a more level playing field, which, in turn, benefits the cow-calf operators in our ability to market to them."

Bryan Ressler, Cooperstown

Family: Wife Lauren and son Isaiah.

NDSA involvement: Ressler is a four-year NDSA member.

Operation: Ressler is a partner in Ressler Land and Cattle. He runs a herd of registered Red Angus cows and sells coming 2-year-old bulls in January with his brother, Mark. The brothers also manage a commercial SimAngus cow-calf operation with their dad, where they background calves and retain ownership through finishing. Ressler also has a small farming operation, where he raises wheat, corn, soybeans, fescue and navy beans. Recently, Ressler has started selling home-raised meat at local grocery stores.



Bryan Ressler

Education: Ressler earned a bachelor's degree in animal science and range science from NDSU.

Other ag involvement: Ressler is a member of the North Dakota Red Angus Association board. In addition, he helps judge local 4-H Achievement Day projects.

Community involvement: Ressler has been on the Cooperstown Volunteer Fire Department for 11 years and is active in the local Knights of Columbus Council. He has also served on the Cooperstown City Council for six years.

Answer: "[The NDSA should] improve the safety net for the cow-calf producer and increase the capacity of local meat processors in the state."

District 2:

Jared Higgins, Woodworth

Family: Wife Rebecca and children Janet, Anna and Grace.

NDSA involvement: Higgins is an eight-year NDSA member.

Operation: He runs a commercial cow-calf operation with his family northeast of Woodworth. The family utilizes Angus and Hereford genetics. In addition, he also runs a commercial sheep flock.



Jared Higgins

Off-farm business: Higgins is a local brand inspector. He also sorts cattle at Jamestown Livestock and Napoleon Livestock Auction.

Answer: "I believe a revamp of Mandatory Price Reporting is something we could do now. I believe all cattle, including formula and contract cattle, should have their price reported, allowing producers and buyers more information when pricing cattle."

Kyle Schultz, Embden

Family: Larissa Feiring and daughter Caroline Schultz.

NDSA involvement: Schultz is a two-year NDSA member.

Operation: Schultz and Ryan, his dad, operate their

family farm based in Embden. They raise corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa. The cattle venture consists of a cow-calf and backgrounding operation and predominately Angus cattle. They have been transitioning into finishing more fat cattle on a yearly basis to meet local demand and as a value-added enterprise. The alfalfa is often sold as dairy-quality hay. While the operation focuses on raising cash crops, the cattle enterprise provides a tremendous benefit, using the animals as a low-cost resource for utilizing poorer quality hay and crop aftermath, he said.



Kyle Schultz

Education: Schultz earned a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics from NDSU.

Community involvement: Schultz is the vice president of the St. John's Lutheran Church of Embden's Council. He is the president of the Four Corners Wildlife Club and the vice president of the Embden Community Club.

Awards and recognition: The Schultz farm was named the winner of the Cass County Soil Conservation District Award in 2017.

Answer: "I think the NDSA should pursue spending the most time educating the consumers as a whole as to the dietary benefits of beef. If more beef is consumed, it helps our industry no matter what. Not only the NDSA, but all of us as members, can do a better job of this. For instance, invite people out to your operations and show them firsthand, and not sugar-coated, how the beef they consume is raised."

District 3:

Lowell Malard, Bismarck

Family: Wife Shannon and children Brita and Clay.

NDSA involvement: Malard is a 23-year NDSA member. He currently serves as the Ag Policy Committee chairman. He is a member of the Budget Committee and Building Committee. In the past, he has served on the Resolutions Committee. Malard has also attended Spring Roundups and the annual convention.



Lowell Malard

Operation: Malard manages a cow-calf operation utilizing primarily Angus genetics. His spring-born calves are weaned in November, backgrounded and typically marketed in the early spring as feeder steers and replacement heifers. He employs a rotational grazing system that focuses on improving grassland and fresh water availability.

Off-farm business: Malard is a construction equipment salesman at Butler Machinery Company.

Education: He earned a bachelor's degree in animal science at NDSU and graduated from the University of Nebraska's Feedyard Management Internship Program.

Other ag involvement: Malard is a charter member of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

Answer: "[The NDSA should] continue to work on cattle market transparency issues and advocate for long-term, industry-based solutions."

District 4:

Scott Katus, Watauga, S.D.

Family: Wife Heather, children Jaci (Andy) Mrnak, Cole, Braydon and Tally and granddaughter Sloan.

NDSA involvement: Katus is a 22-year NDSA member. He has attended the convention and Spring Roundups.

Operation: Scott and Heather, along with sons Cole and Braydon, operate a commercial Angus cow-calf operation and a small registered Angus herd. They utilize both Angus and Hereford bulls. The family runs a heifer development program, producing Angus and black-white-face bred heifers. The family backgrounds steers, selling the top end in January and taking the later-born calves to finish. The Katus family grows corn, sunflowers, wheat, barley, oats, sorghum, millet and alfalfa for both feed and cash crops.

Off-farm business: The Katus family operates Cedar River Lodge, an outfitting and hunting guide service. They are also REA Hybrids seed corn and SweetPro supplement dealers. Katus has served as a certified basketball official for 23 years and offers custom spraying and planting for local customers.

Education: Katus earned an associate degree in farm and ranch management from Bismarck State College (BSC).

Community involvement: Katus is currently serving on the McIntosh Co-op board and has been the president for the past six years. He is a past president of the Corson County Fair Board. He has served on the McIntosh-Watauga Equity Board. He is a director on the Winona Township board and a member of St. Michael's Catholic Church.

Answer: "I think North Dakota cattle producers have taken a big hit with the prices of their product dropping to all-time lows, while prices in the supermarkets are reaching all-time highs. Unfortunately, the packers have too much control over supply. The industry needs to pursue the breakup of the monopoly packers have over supply and hold them accountable for manipulating those supplies to control markets. This will have to be done either through the court system or by getting the government to take steps to correct the problem."



Scott Katus

Travis Wolf, Mandan

Family: Wife Sandy and children Jayden and Kylie.

NDSA involvement: Wolf is a 10-year NDSA member. He has served on the NDSA Nominating Committee.

Operation: Wolf runs a commercial cow-calf operation utilizing primarily Angus-Simmental-cross genetics. He also backgrounds his own calves, in addition to calves he purchases in the fall. He retains ownership of all animals through finish. He also grows spring wheat, corn, sunflowers and soybeans, along with hay crops.

Education: He graduated from BSC with an associate degree in farm and ranch management.

Other ag involvement: Wolf is an adviser on the BSC Ag Board. He is a current adviser and former board member of the Morton County Soil Conservation District.

Community involvement: Wolf is the president of the Sweet Briar School Board.

Answer: “[The NDSA should] work to secure the profitability between the cattle producer and the packing plants — whether we need more competition in the packing industry or look at more options to process more cattle locally and market them directly to the consumer.”



Travis Wolf

District 5:

Howdy Lawlar, Watford City

Family: Wife Jodee and children Jayde, McCoy and Colt.

NDSA involvement: Lawlar is a 13-year NDSA member. He is serving as the chairman of the NDSA Environmental Issues Committee. He has served on the NDSA Nominating Committee and attended Spring Roundups and the annual convention.

Operation: Lawlar manages a registered Angus herd and a commercial Angus cow-calf operation. He markets bulls and cow-calf pairs. He also raises small grains and hay.

Education: Lawlar earned a bachelor’s degree in agricultural education at NDSU.

Other ag involvement: Lawlar serves on the McKenzie County 4-H Livestock Committee and the North Dakota Stockmen’s Foundation Board of Directors.

Community involvement: He volunteers on the Watford City Fire Rescue Department and serves as a McKenzie County commissioner.

Awards and recognition: He received Friend of 4-H and NDSU Harvest Bowl Awards.

Answer: “We need to have more accountability in mandatory reporting for all livestock. We need to continue to work with our legislators and inform them of what’s



Howdy Lawlar

going on in our industry to maintain their support.”

District 6:

Shane Anderson, Towner

Family: Wife Joni.

NDSA involvement: Anderson is a 19-year NDSA member. He is currently serving as the NDSA Brand Board vice chairman and on the NDSA Budget Committee. He has previously served on the NDSA Ag Policy Committee and Nominating Committee. Anderson has attended annual conventions, Spring Roundups, the Young Cattlemen’s Legislative Conference and the national-level Young Cattlemen’s Conference.

Operation: Anderson operates a cow-calf operation of 375 mature cows. Anderson raises his own replacement females, backgrounds the majority of his calves and, occasionally, purchases feeders to background. He utilizes Angus and Lim-Flex genetics. Additionally, he raises corn, oats and alfalfa for feed.

Education: Anderson earned a bachelor’s degree in agricultural education from NDSU with a minor in animal science.

Other ag involvement: Anderson is a National Cattlemen’s Beef Association member and a past Region 7 Young Beef Leader. He is a past director and president of the Towner Ranchers Scale Association. In addition, he has been a member of the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education’s Animal Agriculture Granting Committee.

Awards and recognition: Anderson was awarded *The Cattle Business Weekly’s* “Top 10 Industry Leaders Under 40” title.

Answer: “[The NDSA must] listen to producers, gather information and stay engaged with the problems. I believe the NDSA has done a great job with this recently and in the past. Sometimes, the process seems slow and isn’t easy, but, ultimately, yields positive results.”



Shane Anderson