

# 2020 COMMERCIAL PRODUCER AWARD NOMINEES

## **Bichelmeyer Land and Cattle**

***Owners/Managers: Joe & Marty Bichelmeyer and Jim Bichelmeyer***  
**Kansas City, Kansas**

Just north of the Kansas River sits a small family-owned butcher shop established in the midst of Kansas City's meatpacking boom. Founded by John Bichelmeyer in 1946, Bichelmeyer Meats has been providing consumers in Kansas City and surrounding areas with high-quality meat and custom processing for nearly 75 years. A trusted name in the meat business for generations, the Bichelmeyer family took it one step further when the second generation gained ownership in the 1970s. Wanting to be involved at the beginning of the process as well as the end, John's sons, Joe and Jim, and Joe's wife, Marty, decided to take the business from conception to consumption, which led to the creation of Bichelmeyer Land & Cattle.

With lots of hard work and determination, what began with 58 cows on one rented pasture more than 40 years ago has grown into a 550-head Red Angus-based commercial cow-calf operation located near Williamsburg, Kansas. The females are bred via natural service. Sires are diligently researched and purchased from local seedstock producers. The herd profile is well-rounded, not single-trait specific, and designed to generate pound-producing calves.

The cows are calved in a 55-day window between March and May, weaned in late October and kept until the following January, at which time 100 replacement heifers are selected for retention on the ranch. Depending on economic conditions, the remaining heifers, along with the steers, are sold or finished at a nearby feedyard.

The goal of Bichelmeyer Land & Cattle is efficient production from conception to consumption. They strive to improve the sustainability of the ranch, the well-being of the cattle and to ensure the end-product is the best eating experience for their beef consumers.

The Kansas Livestock Association is proud to nominate Bichelmeyer Land and Cattle.

## **Brentwood Farms**

***Owners: Chip and Misty Burkes***  
***Manager: Trouble Moody***  
**Brent, Alabama**

Brentwood Farms, located in central Alabama near Brent, along the Cahaba River, was established in 2014 by Chip and Misty Burkes, with Trouble Moody at the helm as manager. The Simmental and Angus-cross, 90-day fall-calving cow herd of approximately 400 breeding females graze Bahia and Bermuda grass pastures, with additional acreage in replacement heifer development, hay and Ryegrass baleage production.

With an eye on performance, the Brentwood Farms foundation has been built from Alabama BCIA proven genetics, from fellow BCIA producers and bull evaluations, along with leading genetics in the utilization of artificial insemination. The Simmental and Angus cross provides an exceptional balance of heterosis, growth, maternal and carcass strengths to meet operational goals. The Alabama BCIA Commercial Record Keeping program with the CattleMax system is fully utilized to maintain complete performance records for whole herd evaluation.

Putting into practice the motto of "you cannot manage what you do not measure," breeding, pregnancy percentage, calf weaning and mature cow weights, percent cow weight to weaned calf weight, yearling data for replacement heifers, herd health and carcass data records are all collected

and applied. Dam production history is evaluated for consistency and replacement heifers are selected from proven dams. A future operational goal is to develop as a premier source of performance-based replacement heifers across the Southeast. Pre-conditioned feeder calves are marketed directly to feedyards, by retained ownership and through a cooperative tele-auction. Brentwood Farms is applying performance as a building block to expand toward a substantial future.

Brentwood Farms is proudly nominated by Alabama Beef Cattle Improvement Association.

**Kempfer Cattle Company**  
***Owner/Manager: The Kempfer Family***  
**Saint Cloud, Florida**

Kempfer Cattle Company, started in the late 1890s, is located in St. Cloud, Florida, where the sixth generation is now working on the ranch. They also have a heifer development program in Macon, Mississippi, on 2,000 acres. The ranch in Florida is 25,000 acres. Kempfer Cattle Co. consists of a broad range of landscape with a high percentage of native land. It ranges from marsh and swamp to Palmetto Flatwoods, pine timber, hammocks, and improved pastureland.

The ranch consists of approximately 3,000 mama cows and also runs 750 replacements. Calving season is 90 days, starting in mid-October, with heifers bred to calve in the first 45 to 60 days. The Kempfers use Brahman, Angus and Shorthorn bulls for their maternal cross, and Charolais for a terminal cross. They maintain a minimum of half Brahman blood in their replacements.

Ninety percent of the cow herd is commercial with the balance being purebred Brahman and Angus. They feel the best way to get maternal line bulls, that will be more adapted to their environment and management practices, is to raise the bulls themselves. Kempfer Cattle Co. has been raising Brahmans for more than 40 years and Angus for seven; before that had a hand in the breeding of the Angus herd, which was local, for over 20 years. The top three to four Brahman bulls are retained in the herd with the rest being sold in their annual bull sale. Both Brahman and Angus bulls are performance tested. The yearling Angus bulls are used on replacement heifers in Mississippi then return to Florida to be used on mature cows. The Kempfers sell more than 300 bred heifers annually. Most are private treaty and a select few are sold in special sales. Replacement heifers are selected from those bred in the first 45 days.

The University of Florida's Department of Animal Sciences is proud to nominate Kempfer Cattle Company.

**M&M Farms**  
***Owner: Danny Martin***  
**Raymond, Mississippi**

Since 1963 M&M Farms has been located in Raymond, Mississippi, and is currently home to 130 head of Simmental-influenced cows on 600 acres. The farm has been built from scratch by Danny Martin since his graduation from Mississippi State University. The mature cow herd calves from January to March 15, with heifers calving in December. Calves are marketed in truck load lots at 700 lb. after a 60-day backgrounding period. A select group of bred replacement heifers are marketed annually through the Mississippi BCIA sale each fall. A small group of steers are finished on the farm and marketed locally to repeat customers.

In addition to the cow herd, a custom hay operation is also a large part of the business. Approximately 5,000 square bales and 4,000 round bales are produced and marketed locally to a strong customer base. Custom hay production is also a niche, supporting several neighboring farms on 150 acres. M&M Farms is a grass-based operation; cows are maintained primarily on Bahia and

Bermudagrass during the warm season, and over-seeded Ryegrass for winter grazing. Forage management, continuously improved genetics and a good health program have been extremely important for producing high quality, high-performing calves that bring back repeat buyers each year. M&M Farms is proudly nominated by the Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association.

## **Vest Ranches**

***Owner: Samann Vest-Watkins***

***Manager: Ty Watkins***

**Childress, Texas**

Hard work and humility have been defining traits of the Vest family since Bill Vest ventured out to West Texas in 1887, and it took every ounce of hard work and humility to homestead and run cattle in the rough country of that part of the world. Hard work has been a defining characteristic of the Vest Ranches herd, too. With single pastures larger than some entire farms in the Midwest, their cattle have to be hard workers without sacrificing condition and productivity. Fourth-generation Samann Vest-Watkins and her husband, Ty, have employed a variety of programs and systems that have helped their primarily Angus herd not only survive a tough landscape, but also thrive.

The year 2011 brought a severe drought to West Texas, but through knowledge of the land and raising cattle in that environment that's been passed through the generations, Ty and Samann were able to adjust and continued to improve despite tough conditions. The West Texas and Panhandle ranches have been rebuilding up to the current 1,200 head. An operation that once hung their hat on the steeped tradition of Herefords has become a progressive Angus and Charolais commercial herd. Their unique feeding program, 75-day breeding season and December calving, and management of limited forage and water resources separates their ranch from others, all while improving rangelands and wildlife habitat. Vest Ranches is the definition of sustainability, making the land, cattle and business viable to pass to the coveted fifth generation and beyond.

The American Angus Association and the American-International Charolais Association are proud to nominate Vest Ranches.