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# NEWS

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## Moore than Money

*Arkansas Angus family 2017 CAB Commercial Commitment to Excellence honoree*

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By Laura Conaway

**WOOSTER**, Ohio-Sept. 25, 2017-It was the first call of many.

Harvest sheets in his hand and data on his mind, Jim Moore picked up his Arkansas landline and dialed the *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> (CAB<sup>®</sup>) brand's beef cattle specialist, Paul Dykstra.

Marbling scores, yield grade, feed conversion – having never met in person, they covered all the bases.

“I probably told him something like, ‘Jim, industry average is this and you’re up here, so maybe stop fretting so much.’”

Moore recalls the conversation, too.

“I told him, I said, ‘Paul, one thing you need to understand about me pretty quick is there isn’t nothing about me that wants to be average.’ I don’t want to talk about average at all.”

For that attention to detail and an endless pursuit of quality, CAB honored Moore Cattle Company with its 2017 Commercial Commitment to Excellence Award Sept. 29 in Nashville, Tenn.

On behalf of the family, Jim and Melissa Moore accepted the award at the brand’s annual conference with children Chelsea, Morgan, Clint and daughter-in-law Taylor in the audience.

“It’s all I ever wanted to be from the time I was a little bitty kid,” Moore says. Graduating college in 1985, he returned to the Charleston, Ark., ranch full time and joined in the mystique that surrounds the American cowboy.

“I got to live that dream on a daily basis,” he says. “We’re really out there, horses and all.”

Being “out there” may seem obvious given the nature of the gig, but faced with the option to enlist the help of hired hands and lead from afar, Moore’s at the center of it all – oftentimes alone.

Right now it’s about prioritizing. With his father, JC, not well and his children away, it’s committing to what’s important and following through no matter the obstacles.

“This lifestyle, it teaches you about staring adversity straight in the eye and not flinching, not backing away,” he says. You always persevere.

The Moores do more than persevere, though. They get better.

“Years ago, my grandpa used to tell me, ‘you can keep a good one and feed it just as easy as you can keep a sorry one,’ so both he and my dad saw the value of high-quality genetics. Since then, it’s something we’ve tried to build on year after year.”



Leaving the rest behind, they set their sights on The Business Breed and purchased their first Angus bull in 1990. “From then on, I became a student of the breed.”

Phone calls. To bull studs and feeders, folks at the Association and CAB: Moore asked and learned, applying it to his herd of blacks out back.

“As commercial cattlemen, we feel like it’s our obligation to raise as high-quality beef as we possibly can.”

The rancher’s done it through stacking genetics, utilizing the Zoetis GeneMax Advantage test to measure commercial heifer potential and through retained ownership at the feedyard.

“Once we started selling on a grid, we learned more about our cow herd in one year than we had in the previous 10.”

That data, Moore used for good.

“Jimmy brings to the forefront an example of a rancher who’s not willing to single-trait select,” Dykstra says. “He doesn’t want to make a premium over here just so he can give it up somewhere else.”

2007 carcass data showed 20% CAB, 0% Prime. Unsatisfied, Moore started buying bulls with marbling EPDs (expected progeny differences) of at least 1.00, about twice breed average. Out of 15 calves sired so far, one of those bulls has thrown only CAB, including 12 Primes.

“If you’re trying to hit 80% to 90% CAB and Prime, you’ve got to up the ante a little bit,” Moore says. With the consumer in mind, “If you don’t have the carcass side, what does the maternal side matter, and vice versa? It’s about balance. You’ve got to be willing to give and take.”

With focus on yield grade and feed conversion, Moore calves outperform others in the yard: 2017 calves gained on average 3.8 pounds (lb.) per day on 181 days on feed, converting at a 5.9 ratio.

His most recent closeout of 136 head went 85% CAB, including 28% Prime.

“The cattle are standouts,” Jerry Jackson says. As manager of Stampede Feeders, Scott City, Kan., where the family sends two pens of cattle every fall, he has followed the cattle for nearly a decade. “They’ve finally got the complete package, not to mention they’ve done it all in house.”

History shows the family does in fact build from within. A female hasn’t been bought or brought onto the place in 45 years.

“The thing about the Moores is, it’s them, it’s their deal,” Jackson says. “They don’t sit inside the office and tell everybody else to go to work.”

The rancher asks for critique before getting up and fixing problems himself.

“We have to be critical of ourselves if we want to improve,” he says. “Don’t make excuses.”

That directive obviously applies to culling, Moore says: “If you want to make genetic improvement, you’ve got to send some down the road.”

With numbers closer to where he wants them, “the real challenge is to not mess it up by doing something stupid,” he says.

Perhaps it’s there, though, in the trenches, where Moore has learned the most.

“Something like this makes you step back and analyze where you’ve been and where you’re going,” he says, “and where we’re going is farther than where we’re at. We’ll keep pushing.”

For the consumer, for the cattle, for his family.

He’ll have it no other way.

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