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Intuition ignites shared success

Cudlobe Angus 2018 Inaugural CAB Canadian Commitment to Excellence honoree

By Nicole Lane Erceg

It began on the whim of a teenager, fifty years ago.

Dyce Bolduc, determined to carve his own path in the beef business, purchased three Angus females at a local auction. It seemed like the type of move a naïve cattleman would make, buying a breed that was unpopular and likely not profitable at the time.

But Dyce and David Bolduc saw what few others could — potential.

The brothers, who together operate under the name Cudlobe Angus, run a cow herd of 500 outside of Staveley, Alberta. From the beginning, they've done things differently but their instincts have been spot on.

After successful show careers that brought home banners from majors across the U.S. and Canada, the brothers took a different approach to evaluating their livestock. They noticed a divide between what won for the judge and what worked on the ranch, and turned to data to reveal winners and losers.

When the Canadian Beef Grading System adjusted to account for quality grade in the early 1990s, the Bolduc brothers embraced the change, determined to search out carcass genetics and prioritize them in their herd. Their focus narrowed even further as they adjusted to create Angus cattle that could capture carcass premiums by targeting the *Certified Angus Beef*[®] brand (CAB[®]).



“We’ve been fortunate enough to have a set of cattle that have met all the demands that we’ve asked from them,” Dyce says. “That goal has changed over fifty years, and so each time we’ve demanded that of these cattle, they’ve hit the mark as we’ve varied the target.”

The shift paid off for everyone.

“By continuing to focus on this and changing the makeup of their own cow herd, they created one of the most economically sustainable and industry-leading carcass herds in Canada,” says Rob Smith, Canadian Angus Association CEO.

Their vision and determination to produce genetics that perform both for their commercial customers and on consumer’s plates earned them CAB’s 2018 Canadian Commitment to Excellence Award. The inaugural honor was presented at the Canadian Angus Convention, June 9, in Comox, Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

Dedication to how their genetics perform throughout the beef supply chain and an ability to look at what tomorrow’s market may hold led to their success and recognition.

“I think we’ve got to have enough vision to try and develop a product that creates profit all the way through our industry, for every segment, and generates demand at that final consumer level,” David says.

The siblings use strict selection criteria, and as technology evolves they lean in to the change. They select for high marbling bulls, use ultrasound data, DNA evaluate all bulls with the Zoetis i50K test and collect carcass data on their own and customers’ fed cattle.

The tools are their strategy, the data their map forward.

Tracking customer cattle performance is key. They encourage commercial partners to collect the data and take the time to explain the cutout sheets. A 2018 group of 180 Cudlobe-sired feeder cattle graded 99% AAA or better, with 73% qualifying for CAB including 26% Prime.

It’s proof their system is working, and the foresight they had so many years ago was right, but the knowledge alone isn’t what the brothers hang their hats on. They want to see each customer also capture the added value. In addition to their annual bull sale, they also host a Cudlobe feeder calf sale. Customers can market Cudlobe-sired calves through the video auction, where they have consistently brought \$50 to \$90 above market price.

“David and Dyce have played a significant role in uniting and creating an environment of cooperation and collaboration within our industry,” says Canadian Angus leader Smith. “They have proven that they have an ability to capture a premium on their genetics through application of advanced technologies and dedication to their commercial customers, who benefit from their management and share in the rewards of their work.”

Paying it forward isn’t just a part of their business model. Both David and Dyce served the Canadian beef industry as president of the Canadian Angus Association and have provided leadership through a

variety of other industry organizations including the Canadian Beef Breeds Council, the Beef Improvement Federation and the Canadian Beef Grading Agency.

“I can’t think of any better example of people who are committed to excellence at every level of the beef supply chain,” John Stika, president of Certified Angus Beef LLC, says. “David and Dyce create a foundation of success that is built on what happens after the cattle leave their ranch, and results in a high-quality product for the consumer. They continue to make the best better, and we’re proud to have such dedicated partners for our brand in Canada.”

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