

## **Search for Excellence Award Application**

**March 15, 2020**

### **APPLICATION**

#### ***Building Leaders in the Beef Industry Through the Idaho Young Cattle Producer Conference***

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#### ***Situation:***

The cattle industry in Idaho is one of the leading agriculture industries in the state. Cattle and calves are ranked second only to milk for all Idaho agricultural commodities in terms of cash receipts. In 2015, University of Idaho (UI) College of Agricultural and Life Science (CALs) administration charged the Animal and Veterinary Sciences (AVS) Department and Extension faculty to develop a Beef Program of Distinction (Beef POD). Extension faculty hosted listening sessions across Idaho (Pocatello, Jerome, Boise, Marsing, and Moscow) and gathered input from cattle producers to identify and develop Extension education programs and research that would meet the needs of the beef cattle industry within the state. One issue identified was the need to educate young beef producers about the industry and the importance of becoming involved.

#### ***Response:***

A committee of Extension faculty, cattle producers, and allied industry representatives was formed to address this issue. The committee developed a three-day conference called the Idaho Young Cattle Producer Conference (YCC). The conference is limited to 20 participants, ages 18-40, who are nominated and selected by the committee. The YCC's primary objective is to develop leadership qualities in young cattle producers and expose them to all aspects of the beef industry through educational presentations, hands-on learning, and industry tours.

#### ***The YCC Program:***

The first YCC was held in Twin Falls in 2017, Caldwell in 2018, Lewiston in 2019, and Burley in 2020. Topics from the YCC include: overview of the cattle industry, meat cutting demonstrations, issues facing young cattle producers, financing a cattle operation, risk management, herd health, marketing cattle, public land grazing, and becoming involved in the industry. Tour stops include a cow-calf operation, packing plant, feedlot, a purebred cattle, and/or a stocker operation. Twenty young cattle producers have participated in the YCC each year and evaluated the program upon its completion.

The committee has developed promotional materials including a logo, a program flyer, nomination forms, participant graduation certificates, donor forms, donor recognition poster and platinum donor recognition plaques. A website was also developed to encourage online applications and for marketing purposes ([www.uidaho.edu/ycc](http://www.uidaho.edu/ycc)).

### **Industry Support:**

The Idaho Young Cattle Producer Conference is co-sponsored by the University of Idaho, College of Agriculture, Beef Program of Distinction, University of Idaho Extension, and the Idaho Cattle Association. The program is free of charge to participants due to the generous support of cattle industry businesses and individuals, including Immvac-Endovac Beef, Northwest Farm Credit, Bayer Animal Health, Zoetis, Merck Animal Health, Allflex USA, Simplot Western Stockmen's, Simplot Land & Livestock, Magic Valley Cattle Association, Snake River Cattle Feeders, Jan Ford-H&P Company, Idaho Angus Association, Idaho Beef Council, Pristine Springs Angus Ranch, Certified Hereford Beef, Idaho Ag Credit, and the Idaho/Lewis County Cattle Association.

### **The Evaluation:**

The conference participants are asked to complete an evaluation survey following each conference. Below is a summary of the responses, with a response of 1 being not at all and a response of 5 being a lot or very likely:

Q1 – How much better of an understanding do you have of the beef industry in Idaho at the end of the conference? Average response = 4.5

Q2 – How likely are you to utilize what you learned about current issues facing young producers? Average response = 4.5

Q3 – How likely are you to become more involved in groups affiliated with the beef industry? Average response = 4.3

Q4 – Will what you learned and experienced provide economic value to your operation? Average response = 4.6

Q5 – Do you intend to put any of what you learned to use in your operation? Average response = 4.8

Q6 – Rate the quality of the speakers/information. Average response = 4.9

Q7 – Did you like how the conference was organized? 17% responded, "Yes, leave as is".

Q8 – Would you recommend this conference to others? 100% responded, "Yes".

Q9 – Were the tours interesting/enjoyable? 100% responded, "Yes".

Q10 – Was this a good time of year to hold the conference? 91% responded, "Yes" and 5% responded, "No".

Written comments included:

- *“Enjoyed all aspects of the conference.”*
- *“Loved the tours! Though the information was great.”*
- *“Great meeting. Good opportunity for networking and education.”*
- *“Phenomenal education event, great for networking.”*

A Journal of Extension Article was recently published about the Idaho YCC program:

<https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/joe/vol59/iss1/3/>

***The Future:***

With the beef industry changing so rapidly, identifying and educating leaders to help guide and strengthen the industry has never been so important. With the excellent evaluations and feedback from industry, the University of Idaho Extension will continue to take the lead in educating and providing opportunities to young cattle producers in the state of Idaho for years to come. Planning is underway for the 2021 YCC program, which will be held in Salmon in conjunction with the Idaho Cattle Association.