

Dr. John McKinnon named inaugural recipient of the Canadian Beef Industry Award for Outstanding Research and Innovation

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Saskatoon, SK – A researcher respected nationally and internationally as a leading expert on beef cattle nutrition and management has been awarded the 2015 Canadian Beef Industry Award for Outstanding Research and Innovation.

Presented at the Saskatchewan Beef Industry Conference among many past and present colleagues and students, Dr. John McKinnon was surprised and honored by the announcement.

Dr. McKinnon is a researcher, professor and the Saskatchewan Beef Industry Research Chair at the University of Saskatchewan. He has made phenomenal contributions to advancements in the competitiveness and sustainability of the Canadian beef industry through his long-term passion and dedication to progressive science, and exceptional collaboration, leadership and communication with industry.

His research focuses on nutritional and environmental factors influencing the growth and carcass quality of feeder cattle and the nutrition of the breeding herd. Areas of emphasis within Dr. McKinnon's research program have included the use of wet distiller's by-products for feedlot cattle, nutritional evaluation of grain screenings for growing cattle, use of real-time ultrasound for predicting carcass quality of breeding and finishing cattle, the impact of the environment on performance of cattle in western Canada and the use of high lipid feeds for growing and finishing.

Dr. McKinnon takes a whole systems approach to beef production and his leadership in collaboration and cross-discipline research has been extremely beneficial to improving the competitive advantage of Canadian beef producers.

In addition to the vast list of scientific publications he has authored, Dr. McKinnon is a leader in research extension. He writes countless articles, including as a regular contributor to Canadian Cattlemen – The Beef Magazine, one of the leading publications for Canadian beef producers. He has also been instrumental in the development and coordination of industry extension events to ensure innovative research findings are communicated directly to producers and cattle feeders, including the Saskatchewan Beef and Forage Symposium, the Western Canadian Feedlot Management School, and the Western Nutrition Conference.

Dr. McKinnon is a sought after speaker at producer meetings and industry events where he skillfully shares his knowledge, research findings, and opinions on pertinent industry issues. He is an effective communicator not only at highly technical scientific forums but also in communicating research findings in a practical and applicable manner to cattle producers and industry stakeholders.

In addition, Dr. McKinnon works directly and one-on-one with numerous cow-calf producers, feedlot operators, veterinarians and feed industry personnel on their feeding and management programs. He willingly gives his time and expertise and is seen by the industry as approachable and available to share his knowledge.

As a dedicated Professor at the University of Saskatchewan, Dr. McKinnon has mentored numerous students and researchers throughout his career. He has supervised or co-supervised more than 35 M.Sc. and Ph.D. students to program completion and supervised numerous post-doctoral researchers. Many of these individuals have gone on to have considerable impact in the beef industry and the research community.

Dr. McKinnon continues to provide leadership for the future of the beef cattle industry through his ongoing efforts in the development of the Beef Cattle Research and Teaching Unit. This infrastructure will be a tremendous asset in maintaining the competitiveness of the Canadian beef industry well beyond his career at the University of Saskatchewan.

"The value of Dr. McKinnon's work on the Canadian beef industry is remarkable," said Tim Oleksyn, a cow-calf producer from Shellbrook, Saskatchewan and Chair of the Beef Cattle Research Council (BCRC). "He is dedicated to keeping a practical focus in his research initiatives and has always maintained the need for real-world application within the beef cattle industry."

The Canadian Beef Industry Award for Outstanding Research and Innovation is presented annually by the BCRC on behalf of Canada's beef industry stakeholders. The award recognizes scientists and academics that are actively involved in strong research programs aligned with industry priorities, continually engage with industry stakeholders, and demonstrate their passion and long-term commitment through leadership, teamwork, and mentorship. Nominations are accepted by the BCRC from industry stakeholders and must be accompanied by letters of support from industry stakeholders and scientific colleagues. The recipient is selected by a committee comprised of beef producers, industry experts and retired beef-related researchers located across the country. The award was established in 2015.

Nominations for the 2016 award are now being accepted and must be submitted to the BCRC by May 1, 2016. Remaining 2015 nominations will also be considered for the 2016 award, which will be presented at the Canadian Beef Industry Conference in August 2016.

- 30 -

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