

Alberta's Wray Ranch receive prestigious national environmental stewardship award

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Calgary, AB – The Canadian Cattle Association (CCA) is pleased to announce Wray Ranch, located near Irricana, Alberta, as the recipient of The Environmental Stewardship Award (TESA) for 2023.

Doug and Linda Wray, who own and operate Wray Ranch in partnership with their nephew, Tim Wray and his wife Joanne, are recognized for their focus on sustainable practices to enhance soil health and reduce erosion.

The ranch underwent a transformation in 1998, when 1,000 acres of cropland were converted into high-legume perennial pasture, enabling year-round grazing practices. With a focus on sustainability, the Wrays continue to actively monitor metrics like soil organic matter to ensure the health of their land and, when needed, they adjust herd size and rent or custom graze additional pastures to maintain the well-being of their pastureland. These efforts help the Wrays weather the impacts of adverse weather such as drought.

The Wrays commitment to soil health is evident through conservation tillage, pasture management, bale grazing, and swath grazing, resulting in significant improvements such as increased soil organic matter and reduced erosion.

Their dedication extends beyond the ranch, as they actively share their expertise and experience with the broader community through mentoring programs, speaking engagements, on-farm trials, and volunteering efforts. By adopting a balanced management approach and prioritizing the land's well-being over maximum profit, Wray Ranch exemplifies a model of sustainable and responsible farming practices.

The award was presented in-person by Mike Duguid, Co-Chair of CCA's Environment Committee and Kelleen Tait, National Leader, Livestock and Poultry with MNP, during the Canadian Beef Industry Conference (CBIC). Wray Ranch was one of seven regional nominees from across Canada vying for the national award.

"The Wrays fully embrace what it means to be stewards of the land and set a strong example of the care that cattle producers from across Canada take to ensure that the land is left in better condition for the next generation," said Duguid. "Wray Ranch is a testament to how responsible farming practices can go hand in hand with success and their importance to navigating challenging drought years. Congratulations to all nominees for their outstanding dedication to environmental stewardship and setting a remarkable example for sustainable farming practices across Canada."

Thank you to our Platinum Sponsor, MNP, and our Foundational Partners, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Birds Canada, and the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB), for supporting this year's TESA program. CCA would also like to recognize the contributions of our judging committee, Karli Reimer and Kristine Tapley with Ducks Unlimited Canada; Norine Ambrose with Cows & Fish; Doug and Erika Fossen, 2022 TESA recipients; and CCA

Environment Committee Co-Chairs Duane Thompson and Mike Duguid, who had the difficult task of selecting this year's recipient.

About the TESA

The TESA recipient is awarded annually by CCA at the Canadian Beef Industry Conference and has recognized the outstanding stewardship efforts of Canadian beef producers since 1996.

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