

Alberta Angus Youth 'rock the ring' at first-ever Summer Synergy

Held in conjunction with the premiere "Summer Synergy", participants in the 35th Annual Alberta Junior Angus Association certainly came away with a greater investment in their future training and education.

With almost \$40,000 awarded in scholarships as part of the new "Summer Synergy" initiative, Angus youth represented more than one-third of the recipients.

In the fall of 2009, the Calgary Stampede's International Youth Livestock Committee, under the facilitation of Stampede Director David Sibbald (SSS Red Angus) and the leadership of Tracy Lundago (Diamond T Cattle Co.), ventured into a new concept entitled "Summer Synergy". By relocating the Calgary Stampede's youth livestock program, geared to young agriculture producers in Canada, off park, and collaborating with Alberta's Junior Breed Associations, the quantity of participants increased wildly and exposure to the Stampede brand increased. The Stampede partnered with Olds Agricultural Society, a significant supporter of youth in agriculture, to produce the "Synergy" initiative along with fellow founding partners Alberta 4-H and Olds College. Finally, Junior breed associations representing Simmental, Charolais, Hereford and, of course, Angus joined in to host their annual programs in conjunction with "Synergy". Additionally there was an "All Other Breeds" section involving all other interested youth not represented by a participating Junior breed association.

Since "Summer Synergy" is not just a beef event, a Heavy Horse component was also involved as was, for the very first time, the 64th Annual Provincial 4-H Dairy Show. The final component which 'kicked off' the "Synergy" week was the 34th Annual Provincial 4-H Beef Heifer Show. In all, over 340 youth and 600 head of livestock were featured at OAS from Monday, July 12th to the 16th as part of the "Summer Synergy" initiative, 148 of which qualified for scholarship consideration. On Saturday, July 17th, breed show champions and all scholarship finalists moved into the Calgary Stampede to be part of the "Youth Showcase" featuring 'Youth-In-Action-In-Agriculture'. Supreme Champions of all participating components of "Summer Synergy" were declared and the final scholarship results announced.

Among the Angus fraternity members receiving scholarships include the following:

RBC Ambassador Scholarships

\$500 Junior recipient - Laurie Morasch, Bassano

\$750 Intermediate recipients - Dakota Townsend, Sylvan Lake & Andie Hadway, Didsbury

Enbridge Citizens of Tomorrow Awards - *Intermediate Scholarships*

\$1000 recipients: Ty Dietrich, Forestburg; Andie Hadway; Dakota Townsend

\$500 recipient: Kathryn Dolliver, Stettler

Calgary Stampede Foundation - *Senior Scholarships*

\$2000 recipients: Samantha Sperber, Rimbey; Katelyn Dietrich, Forestburg; Ethan Gosling, Strathmore

\$1000 recipients: Carling Matejka, Ponoka; Brittney Matejka, Ponoka; Emily Puch, Pincher Creek

Of the \$37,000 awarded through the "Summer Synergy" initiative to 30 individuals, Angus youth numbered 11, representing 37% of the total number of recipients as well as 39% of the total monetary value of the scholarships. Way to go, Angus youth!

Additionally, "Summer Synergy" named a Junior Angus member - Samantha Sperber, Rimbey - one of the first two recipients of the "Cattlemen's Young Leaders Development Program" training and mentorship initiative. We can all look forward to a bright future for and important outcomes from this gifted, intelligent young cattleman!

Further, Angus youth figured prominently in the awarding of legendary Calgary Stampede Beef Aggregate awards. Presented to the individual with the highest overall standing among all youth participating based on points accumulated in Marketing, Judging, Showmanship and Conformation placings, Angus youth won two of the three age categories and had greater representation in these Top 5 placings in Junior, Intermediate and Senior finals than any other breed.

Laurie Morasch was the recipient of the **J. Chas Yule Memorial Trophy** for Champion Junior Aggregate. Wacey Townsend, Sylvan Lake, was one of the finalists.

Angus youth claimed the Top Three placings in the Intermediate category, with Andie Hadway receiving the **Michael Boyce Memorial Trophy**. Dakota Townsend was Reserve and Tyler Dietrich finished third.

In the Senior category, Samantha Sperber was the Reserve Aggregate Champion while Katelyn Dietrich was among the finalists. In total, almost half of the 15 Top 5 Aggregate finalists were Alberta Junior Angus exhibitors.

It doesn't matter where they go or what they do... Angus youth always impress! Congratulations to the scholarship recipients and ALL exhibitors in the 35th Annual Alberta Junior Angus Show for your leadership and commitment to being part of this awesome new program!

For more information on the "Summer Synergy" initiative, please contact Tracy Lundago - tracy@oldsagsociety.com.