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### **Montie Soules Named Canadian Hereford Association Ambassador for 2007**

The Canadian Hereford Association's Ambassador Award recognizes persons, family operations, or businesses that are non-residents of Canada, and/or non-members, which have made a major contribution to the promotion of Canadian Hereford Genetics. We are proud to award Montie Soules of the Star Lake Cattle Ranch with this honour for 2007.

"Montie Soules has become the only American cattle breeder who's treated like a Canadian," in the words of cattle marketer Ted Serhienko, owner of T Bar C Cattle Company and publisher of Herefords Today. "Montie is recognized here as a competitor, a judge, a bidder and buyer, and a friend. He's one of few American breeders who attend the big Hereford shows in Toronto and at Agribition on a regular basis."

The breeder and/or exhibitor of an estimated nearly 100 North American National Champions, the ranch and cowherd managed by Montie Soules has garnered more Premier Breeder honours at top North American shows than any other breeding establishment.

He's also a man who appreciates his roots, in the words of auctioneer Colonel Eddie Sims. "There's no aspect of the industry he hasn't experienced," says Sims, "from fence builder, to fitter, to student, to owner, boss and partner. That's what makes him a leader." He's also a master marketer.

Montie grew up with two sisters on his parents' turkey operation in the state of Michigan. His family is of Greek heritage. He became further involved with livestock through his experience in 4-H and college at Michigan State University (MSU) under the guidance of David Hawkins in the animal science department. He also bought his first Herefords from MSU. He later started his own fitting business and leased equipment and his services out to purebred sales across the Northeast for about three years. Montie got his first opportunity to shine when hired by Alex Ewing, to manage the ACE Polled Hereford herd in New York State in 1978. It is said that Montie put ACE on the map among elite breeders.

The herd that Montie built at ACE provided the foundation for the herd that he manages today. How he managed the business of that herd has given him the reputation of "one of the very most respected managers of any breed in North America," in the words of Sims. In a conscientious manner, he strived to make everything good, better. That original ACE herd was highly influenced by the addition of a cow herd purchased from Justamere Farms of Alberta. It also relied heavily on the addition of other Canadian genetics, made possible by the close proximity to the U.S.-Canadian border.

That same herd, which was eventually moved by Ewing to Oklahoma State, was ultimately purchased by Dan Thorne and relocated to the Star Lake Ranch. Montie followed the herd. More recently, Montie facilitated the change of ownership of the Ranch and Herefords to the Blin Family. Through all the transitions, the herd has grown and deepened in quality. As Montie's long time friend Johnny Winston says, it is a herd that beats the drum and waves the flag for the Hereford breed, as one of the most progressive and innovative in North America.

The Star Lake herd's influence would soon spill into Canada, Australia, Argentina, and the European Union. Montie was one of the first to market cattle by putting his auction online and on RFD-TV. The Star Lake bull sale is the largest Hereford bull sale in Oklahoma and the Southwestern U.S.

In Canada, Montie has never been afraid to buy a bull, if he feels it could be a contributor to the breed. He often has animals sold before he buys them. He has a mini, mental business plan for each. Semen interests are sold to turn a profit for all owners and breeders involved. He has marketed the Star Lake Bulls through the Canadian bull book and through other Canadian bull markets. Montie also always helps the people that helped him.

Star Lake Cattle Ranch regularly exhibits cattle at prominent Canadian Livestock shows, motivating many Canadian breeders to improve their programs. As Sims puts it, if there is jealousy for his success, it is "jealousy with respect." Montie helped many small breeders enrich their programs because of their affiliation with him. He has encouraged the Canadian industry to rely more on performance data to illustrate benchmarks that need to be challenged.

When the beef industry was struck hard by closed borders due to the threat of BSE, Montie made the decision to increase his support of Canadian breeders by continuing to buy cattle here, going so far as to establish a Canadian Star Lake herd, which purchased some of the top-selling Herefords in sales over the past few years. Through Star Lake's partnership with River Valley Hereford Farms, Montie started a joint production sale, to offer the results of his carefully selected Canadian herd. At that sale, he introduced the concept of replacing the sale ring with recent sale cattle videos, while sale lots were also on display for

viewing. That herd and sale continues today. It is an innovative new concept in purebred auction sales introduced to Canadian breeders.

While his philosophy is profit-driven, with no emotional attachments, Montie Soules never forgets the human equation of his business. He treats people fairly and tells it like it is. Montie's colleagues and friends know that he has always been dedicated to supporting the young cattlemen of both the U.S.A. and Canada.

Just as he doesn't rely on others to sell his cattle, he inspires fellow breeders to be better marketers. As Serhienko says, Montie's friendship and knowledge is gladly shared with anyone who takes the time to know him.

Congratulations Montie, you are definitely a friend of the Canadian Hereford industry. Your efforts make this award extremely well deserved.

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