



Reflected R Ranch named Outstanding Seedstock Producer



Reflected R Ranch, owned & operated by the Curtis & Susan Russell family, was named the **2015 Colorado Cattlemen's Outstanding Seedstock Producer** at the CCA Mid-Winter Conference on Jan. 19, 2016, in Denver.

Here are highlights from the application, submitted by Bent-Prowers Cattle & Horse Growers, and selected as the honorees by CCA.

Reflected R is dedicated to producing moderately framed, heavy muscled Simmental seedstock.

The cattle are raised in the short-grass country of Southeastern Colorado, just a few miles outside Sugar City. Cattle are summered on a nearby grazing association and trailed, with horses, home to winter pasture before calving in February & March. Nearly all calves are AI-sired.

Their Simmental-influenced cowherd emphasizes calving ease and fertility. Likewise, frame is moderate and disposition rated gentle for their family operation.

The predominately solid-black herd is maintained on roughage year-round, either pasture or baled feed, free choice mineral and only some protein supplementation as calving season approaches. The herd is Persistently Infected Bovine Viral Diarrhea (PI-BVD) tested free, and a parasite and vaccination program is used.

Top bulls receive annual breeding soundness exams and are tested for trichomoniasis. For the past 20 years, the registered bulls have undergone multi-step culling, with choice prospects sold private treaty. However, starting in the spring of 2014, bull prospects will be sold through a SimGenetics auction in Colorado. Cattle also are promoted through direct mail newsletters and on their website: ReflectedRRanch.com.

Top heifer mates in the calf crop are retained in Reflected R's herd, as range conditions allow. Unfortunately, the last 3 years of drought have prompted both resting of pastures and herd reduction.

All animals are registered through the American Simmental Association's Total Herd Enrollment option. The Expected Progeny Differences (EPDs) are monitored, with an emphasis on calving ease combined with adequate growth.

In addition to the registered cattle operation, the Russells own and operate WW Feed & Supply in nearby La Junta, and run commercial yearlings, which utilize their grazing shares and are marketed through local sale barns or video auction.

Curtis & Susan Russell have been involved with agriculture for their entire lives. Both grew up on farm and cattle operations in Kansas. They were involved in judging teams (livestock & meats) and agricultural organizations, and earned degrees from Kansas State University. They have ranched in Colorado since 1996, where Curt has put his nutrition and feedlot background to work both on and off the ranch.

They are active members of Colorado Cattlemen's Association (CCA) and their local CCA affiliate (first CKL, then Bent-Prowers). Curt serves on the CCA marketing committee; Susan serves as Bent-Prowers secretary/treasurer, a role she has filled since 2005. Curt has gone through the BQA training program and Susan has participated in the affiliate officer/NCBA beef spokesman training. They also receive educational updates through their feed store.

Curtis & Susan serve their breed association on the state and national level. Curt is serving his 10th year on the Colorado Simmental Association (CSA) board and is currently in his second term as president. Susan is a former director and has served as CSA secretary/treasurer since 1998. Susan also is primary coordinator for Simmental's National Western Stock Show breed shows and events in Denver.

Their younger son Chad is currently serving as Colorado Junior Simmental Association president; and older son Jason previously served in that role, plus as an American Junior Simmental Association board trustee.

Curtis served six years on the American Simmental's board, including a term on the ASA Executive Committee and chairman of ASA's publication arm. Subsequently, Susan was elected to the national board, making the first husband-wife team to have served ASA. She has been an ASA board western trustee since October 2009 and she is currently chairman of ASA's Activities & Events committee, which oversees judges, shows and youth.

The family also is involved in school, church, 4-H, FFA, and Steer-Aid, an incentive program they created to help Southeast Colorado youth.

Reflected R Ranch was named *CSA Outstanding Breeder* for 2009/10; and Susan was awarded *CCA Volunteer of the Year* in 2012.