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NEWS RELEASE

Hall follows in dad's footsteps with UFA Steer Classic win

CALGARY – Call this Barry Hall's version of tough love.

"I actually bet my son (Justin) in the spring that his steer wouldn't be good enough to go to Calgary," said the veteran rancher from Craven, Sask. "And in the past, oh, two months, I knew I was going to lose that bet."

Did he ever. Early Saturday evening, at the conclusion the Calgary Stampede's 29th annual UFA Steer Classic, Justin's 1,404-pound Angus was bathed in glory as the grand champion – a victory worth \$9,000, plus \$1,000 for best-in-breed honours in the Stampede steer show's Angus class.

The Hall family victory came on the heels of the steer's win at the Lloydminster Classic Steer Stake Show, and brought things full circle for Barry, who himself had won the UFA Steer Classic in 1989 and '94 – and hadn't returned to the Stampede City since.

"I'm ecstatic. My son's been after me for a few years to come back, and I told him that it takes a lot of work. It's not something you just go and do. It's countless hours of work and preparation," said Barry. "To finally come out and get 'er done, this is just awesome."

As per a decade-long tradition, the grand champion steer has been purchased by the Penny Lane Entertainment Group, and will likely be the main course at Zen 8 restaurant for a fall gala fundraiser to benefit the University of Calgary's Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, said Penny Lane managing partner Aki Fujita. "It's beautiful. I'm excited to cook up a black Angus, for sure," said Fujita.

The reserve champion, a 1,385-pound Limousin from Denfield, Ont., was worth a runner-up cheque of \$4,000 – as well as another \$1,000 for best-in-class – to its owners, Mark Phillips and Brodie Gutzke of Phillips Cattle Co. The steer has been purchased by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Landmen.

As for his win, "I had high hopes coming in here after winning Lloyd, but you never know what can happen," said 20-year-old Justin. "It all depends on what the judge (David Longshore of Stettler, Alta.) wants. But it all worked out for the best."

With 98 entries this year from Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario – up from 79 a year ago – the UFA Steer Classic represents the culmination of the regional steer show season. The richest steer show in Canada, the UFA Steer Classic sees members of the beef industry congregate at the Stampede to promote and compete in everything from the merits of purebred genetics to the current trends in consumer beef demands.

"This is all about getting urbanites to understand what's happening in the cattle business," said David Pyke, who chairs the Stampede's Steer Classic committee. "It's a show that produces finished beef, and it's a good opportunity to locals to come down and see how the agriculture business works."

Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Limited

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With roots tracing back to 1983, the UFA Steer Classic is nearly three decades old . . . but suddenly got a lot younger this summer. Organizers have put a special emphasis on the show's Junior Class by boosting the payout to the winners – \$5,000, including a \$3,000 scholarship, to the owner of the grand champion, and \$3,500, including a \$2,000 scholarship, to the owner of the reserve champion. Shelby Kent of Carstairs, Alta., and Kathryn Dolliver of Stettler, Alta., respectively, earned those inaugural scholarships, and their winning steers were put in the spotlight at Saturday's all-new Junior Champion Auction, which was held immediately after the UFA Steer Classic, with proceeds sustaining the scholarship fund.

In addition, two \$1,000 incentive draws were made for junior-aged UFA Steer Classic exhibitors – one for those who showed a spring steer show champion, another for those who showed in the Summer Synergy program. Exhibitors in the UFA Steer Classic's Junior Class are aged anywhere from 9 through 20.

"Our motivation is always to make this show bigger and better, and we thought that if we could focus on the junior aspect, it'd be a great way to expand the show," said Pyke. "Youth is still very much involved in agriculture, and this is just another reason to keep them involved. The scholarships bring them to the table, and help them to pursue their interests."

Another new element of this year's UFA Steer Classic is the Jackpot Heifer Show, which will be held Sunday, July 17 at 11:30 a.m. in the Agriculture Barns.

The UFA Steer Classic's list of grand and reserve breed champions, respectively, is as follows: Hall and Curtis Flewelling of Bowden, Alta., in Angus; Dennis Serhienko of Maymont, Sask., and Calgary's High Bluff Stock Farm in Charolais; Coleman Nixdorff of Airdrie, Alta., and Les Watson of White Fox, Sask., in Hereford; Phillips Cattle Co. and Jarrett Davis of Acme, Alta., in Limousin; Lone Star Angus of Sylvan Lake, Alta., and Flewelling Cattle Co. of Bowden, Alta., in Market Heifer; Barry Fraser of Ardrossan, Alta., and Red Neck Stock Club of Beiseker, Alta., in Murray Grey; Blue Moon Ranch of Weyburn, Sask., and Lone Star Angus in Open; Nexera Land and Cattle of Drake, Sask., and Mark Draves of Streamstown, Alta., in Simmental; and Tim Chalack of Carstairs, Alta., and Barry Ducherer of Neilburg, Sask., in Speckle Park.

The majority of the entries in the UFA Steer Classic will be entered in the Stampede's Quality Beef Competition on Monday, July 18, at Cargill Foods in High River, Alta., which pays \$3,000 plus the value of the carcass to the grand champion, and \$2,000 plus the value of the carcass to the reserve champ.

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The Calgary Stampede is a volunteer-supported, not-for-profit community organization that preserves and promotes western heritage and values. The Stampede contributes to the quality of life in Calgary and southern Alberta through its world-renowned 10-day Stampede, year-round facilities, western events and several youth and agriculture programs. All revenue is reinvested into Calgary Stampede programs and facilities. For more about the Stampede, visit www.calgarystampede.com.

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