



July 17, 2011

NEWS RELEASE

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## 10-Day Beef Highlights from the 2011 Calgary Stampede

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CALGARY – When it comes to promoting the beef cattle industry, the Calgary Stampede has once again broken from the herd.

Beef cattle have played an essential role in the Stampede since its 1912 inception. And with nearly 40 per cent of the Canadian herd currently based in Alberta, the Stampede does its best to impress upon visitors the meaningful impact that the beef industry has on Wild Rose Country.

“The beef industry is a huge part of our culture, particularly here in Alberta,” says Stampede director Byron Hussey. “We’ve bragged about Alberta beef for years, and made it front and centre with the urban community. It’s a magnet for the urban community to learn more, and ask more.

“We try to give an understanding as to how the industry is able to lay the claim that if it ain’t Alberta, it ain’t beef.”

The Stampede’s latest approach to beef promotion is the Cattle Trail. Presented as a new exhibit during the entire 10-day run of the 2011 Stampede, the Cattle Trail is an engaging, interactive presentation of the beef cattle industry that travels from pasture to plate. The Cattle Trail follows the entire production cycle, recounts each chapter of the beef story, and explains steps taken to ensure safe food production, environmentally sustainable practices, and animal welfare.

“As a new exhibit, the Cattle Trail was extremely popular for both our industry partners and our guests,” says Hussey. “The traffic flow through there was far higher than most of us anticipated.

“Our industry partners were extremely pleased with their interaction with the public, and our guests were surprised and impressed, and felt engaged. Clearly, there’s a huge thirst on the part of the general public to learn how their food is raised.”

The 29<sup>th</sup> annual UFA Steer Classic, held on Saturday, July 16, saw nearly 100 entries, thanks to a concerted effort this year to attract more junior-aged exhibitors. Justin Hall, 20, of Craven, Sask., won this year’s show with a 1,404-pound Angus. Hall collected \$9,000 for his grand champion steer, which also earned \$1,000 for best-in-breed honours. And as part of a long-standing tradition, the steer was purchased by the Penny Lane Entertainment Group, and will be the main course at its annual Champion Steer Dinner fundraiser at Zen 8 restaurant in the fall.

The inaugural Junior Steer Champion Auction, which immediately followed the UFA Steer Classic, saw champion steers owned by Shelby Kent of Carstairs, Alta., and Kathryn Dolliver of Stettler, Alta., auctioned off and more than \$21,000 raised for 2012 UFA Steer Classic youth scholarships. Another new component of the UFA Steer Classic was the Jackpot Heifer Show, held on Sunday, July 17 and won by Dakota and Wacey Townsend of Sylvan Lake, Alta.

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"We were back up to 100 entries, some from as far away as Ontario," said David Pyke, who chairs the Stampede's Steer Classic committee. "It was also well attended, with a good audience.

"The focus of this show is on finished beef, of course, and there was no clear winner in the beginning. And that's a good sign. It was well-fought-out, with excellent cattle here."

For the second straight year, the Stampede's International Youth Livestock Show saw some of its leading lights share the floor with exhibitors at the UFA Steer Classic as part of the International Youth Livestock Supreme Championship.

Four young competitors who displayed exceptional conformation and presentation of their respective species projects were crowned under the Stampede's Big Top in various classes — Supreme Purebred Beef Champion (Laurie Morash of Bassano, Alta.), Supreme Commercial Beef Champion (Kyle Dodgson of Sangudo, Alta.), Supreme Dairy Champion (Jaclyn Hunter of Lacombe, Alta.), and Supreme Sheep Champion (Cayley Peltzer of Rosemary, Alta.).

Meanwhile, Armstrong, B.C., continued to flex its muscle as an auctioneering hotbed during the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual International Livestock Auctioneer Championship, held Saturday, July 16 under the Big Top. Rod Burnett emerged from a field of 10 finalists to earn the Stampede title, collecting \$5,500 in cash and prizes and earning an automatic berth into the 2012 World Livestock Auctioneer Championship at Hilmar, Calif.

Burnett is the third auctioneer from the Okanagan Valley community in British Columbia to win the Stampede crown, following brothers Peter and Don Raffan.

"We had a great competition with a really good cross-section of competitors," said Dan Skeels, a member of the Stampede's International Livestock Auctioneers committee. "We had quite a few rookies, and some seasoned vets in this deal. And it was not a cakewalk. It came right down to the wire, and we've got an extremely good guy who's going to be the reigning champion and a great representative for the livestock industry."

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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](http://www.calgarystampede.com).



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