



Yolo Land & Cattle Co. of Woodland, CA, named National Environmental Stewardship Award winner

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The Yolo Land & Cattle Company is the 2008 Environmental Stewardship Award National Winner, officially announced last week by the award selection committee. In the summer of 2007, the owners of Yolo Land & Cattle Company—the Hank Stone family—were initially chosen as one of the regional winners, representing the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association’s (NCBA) Region VI. The prestigious award program—sponsored by National Cattlemen’s Foundation, NCBA, Dow AgroSciences, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service—is now in its 17th year.

“This year the selection of a national winner was extremely difficult, with six strong applications vying for the national award,” explains Iowa cattleman Dave Petty, chairman of the selection committee. “All of these stewards are operating in difficult environmental conditions and they are going above and beyond. It gives us great pleasure to award the Stone Family, who has been operating for generations, as this year’s national winner. Their commitment to the cattle industry and preserving their land speaks volumes about the operation’s commitment to conservation.”

“Recognizing the importance of sustainability has allowed the family to collaborate with multiple local, state, and national groups to restore hundreds of acres of grasslands, riparian habitat, and stock ponds with California native flora,” Petty added. “Yolo Land & Cattle Company has served as leaders in the industry and a model of innovation. By placing large portions of their land into conservation easements, the family ensures the future of the operation for generations to come.”

A sampling of the projects that Yolo Land & Cattle Co. has implemented include: a vegetative management plan (VMP), rotational grazing, grazing on Conservation Reserve Program lands, and invasive weed control. Partnering with the California Audubon Society and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the company created the largest VMP in the state of California for the purpose of conducting annual spring grass burns and fall brush burns on a total 45,000 acres.

“Environmental stewardship and conservation are at the forefront of our industry, as shown by these six regional winners,” says Bob Josserand, chairman of the National Cattlemen’s Foundation Board of Trustees. “This year’s national winner, the Hank Stone Family of California, is a great example for others to follow. I have no doubt that they will continue to be strong proponents of conservation and serve as excellent role models for producers across the country.”

“The long-standing commitment of the Stone family to preserve and protect their land has allowed the family’s ranch to increase productivity while protecting the environment,” says Petty. “We are very pleased to recognize them.” — **WLJ**

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