

Cattle ranch win brings new merit to Southern ranchers

By Judith Brown
Staff Writer

A Laurens area cattle ranch has won the national level award for excellent yield and quality by the Red Angus Association of America.

Bull Hill Ranch, located between Laurens and Gray Court, recently received the Grid Master Award, making it the first time a farm east of the Mississippi River has ever been selected for the national level award.

Bull Hill Ranch, located on Trinity Church Road, is owned by Jim and Alvena Meeks and is managed by Raymond Prescott. The Red Angus Cattle are a true Angus breed, but if bred carefully, the genetically recessive red coloring can be maintained in a herd, Prescott said.

The Red Angus Association began offering the Grid Master Award competition about eight years ago but this is the first time the Laurens area farm has entered.

"The award is for producing cattle with excellent carcass quality," said Prescott, "and for producing high quality and high yield."

Just to apply for the award requires meticulous record keeping and at least 30 cattle have to be held back for the competition, which takes place once the cattle are transferred to a facility in Kansas.

"There were 54 animals graded (from Bull Hill Ranch)," Prescott said. "Of that, 85 percent were graded choice, 28 percent yielded premium products, 70 percent was yield grade 1 and 2 and zero percent was



WINNING CATTLE — Raymond Prescott, right, the ranch manager of Bull Hill Ranch on Trinity Church Road near Laurens, receives the Red Angus Association of America's Grid Master Award from Myron Edelman, director of value-added programs for the Red Angus Association. Bull Hill Ranch, owned by Jim and Alvena Meeks, is the first cattle ranch east of the Mississippi to win the prestigious award.

yield grade 4."

"You must receive a grid score of 100 to qualify and we achieved an overall grid score of 112, and the actual grid score numbers won us the award," Prescott said, a feat that he feels benefits all Southeastern cattle farms.

"Cattle from the Southeast have gotten a bad reputation because when cattle has to be shipped to get to Midwest for finishing where the corn supply is, they used to run into more sickness from the stress of trav-

el," Prescott said.

Southeastern cattle would often automatically be discounted "simply because of location," he said. "It may have been true several years ago but we're doing a lot better job" with keeping the livestock healthy during transport.

"There's still a stigma to southern cattle," Prescott said, "so this award can go a long way to putting an end to that, that we can compete and have good quality across the Southeast and Laurens County."

Low cost spay, neuter dates announced

An Animal Allies van will be at the Clinton Animal Hospital in Clinton on Oct. 11th and 25th at 6:45 a.m. on these dates to pick up animals to be spayed or neutered and transport them to Spartanburg where a team of expert veterinarians will perform the procedures. The van will return with the animals to Clinton Animal Hospital at 5 p.m. the same day.

All animals must have required vaccinations. Animal Allies will administer these for \$13 if proof of such shots is not available. The cost of the spay/neutering per animal is as follows: male dog, \$57; female dog, \$62; dog over 75 lbs., \$77;

male cat, \$32; female cat, \$47; feral cat, \$45 (this charge includes shots and ear tipping for feral cats only). There is no extra fee for an animal that is in heat or pregnant.

Appointments are necessary and may be made by calling the Humane Society at 984-6484. Speaking clearly, leave your name and daytime telephone number, give the number of cats and dogs you wish to have spayed or neutered, and a convenient time to call you back. A humane society volunteer will call you with more details and will give you the toll-free number to call Animal Allies to make a definite appointment.

Do not call Clinton Animal Hospital about this service as they are not involved with the specifics of the program.

As available, assistance is offered to Laurens County residents with limited income (i.e. on Medicaid, with EBT card, on Social Security Disability, or who have a very limited retirement income) who need help in paying the fee to Animal Allies. Please ask about a voucher when calling for an appointment. One will need to provide proof of limited income, brought on the morning of the appointment to be eligible for voucher assistance.

Local author's book available for purchase

What happens when a man becomes a hero against his wishes? Well, things get ugly. That's the hard lesson Riley Mansfield, the principal character in Monte Dutton's novel *The Audacity of Dope*, learns rather quickly. Mansfield is a small-time musician and songwriter, writing his country-folk songs for bigger stars after first auditioning them in the honky tonks and coffeehouses where he has learned to fend for himself.

Headed home from yet another road trip, Riley stares into the face of disaster — and prevents it from happening. By nobly sacrificing his beloved Baby Taylor, he saves every-

one on the plane. To the great benefit of the passengers, his guitar blows up instead over the treetops of Greenville, thrusting Riley into the unwanted glare of the spotlight.

"It's a beautiful story that gets ugly," says the author. "I came up with this story of a guy who does the right thing and winds up paying for it."

Dutton, a sportswriter who lives in Clinton, is the author of *True to the Roots: Americana Music Revealed*, as well as several books about NASCAR. He has written regularly about NASCAR since 1993, and for the Gaston Gazette, Gastonia, N.C.,

since 1996. He was named Writer of the Year by the Eastern Motorsports Press Association (Frank Blunk Award) in 2003 and Writer of the Year by the National Motorsports Press Association (George Cunningham Award) in 2008. His NASCAR writing has been syndicated by King Feature Syndicate in the form of a weekly page, "NASCAR This Week."

The Audacity of Dope is Dutton's first novel, and will be available for purchase through Amazon.com in trade paperback (ISBN 978-0982697115, 290 pages) and Kindle.

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Corbin comes to Laurens stage

Laurens Parks and Recreation Department will host its final country music act of the year when the city brings in Easton Corbin, one of the fastest rising artists in the business, according to Jason Pridgen, director of the Parks and Recreation department.

Corbin will perform in Laurens on Friday, Oct. 14. Tickets went on sale Sept. 12 for \$15, and then \$20 on the day of the show. VIP tickets for spots right in front of the Laurens Amphitheater are \$30 each.

The Laurens Little River Amphitheater is located on Gordon Street behind the Laurens Post Office.

Tickets can be purchased on weekdays at Laurens City Hall or online using PayPal at Laurenstickets.com. For more information call 984-3933 or e-mail laurensprd@yahoo.com.

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