



2018 HONOREE: SAMUEL L. HANDS

On March 1, 2018, Kansas State University Department of Animal Sciences & Industry and the board of directors of the Livestock and Meat Industry Council Inc., honored Samuel L. Hands as the Stockman of the Year in Manhattan, Kansas. Sam and his family run Triangle H, a commercial cattle feeding business located near Garden City, Kansas. Triangle H is recognized as a member of U.S. Premium Beef's Qualified Custom Feedlot list.

A fourth-generation cattleman, Sam began his career in the beef industry in 1957 by purchasing 12 bred Angus heifers with his dad, Fielding. As a vocation agriculture student, he expanded his herd by being a custom caretaker for a young Angus breeder.

While in college at Kansas State University, Hands served as a State FFA Officer and received the American Farmer Degree. He was a member of the meat, wool and livestock judging teams, Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity and Block & Bridle. In December 1970, Sam graduated from K-State with a degree in animal sciences and industry with a business option.

Following college, Sam served two years as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Army with a tour in Vietnam before he returned home to join his father's operation. He partnered with his two brothers, Greg and Cedric, to establish Triangle H Grain & Cattle Co. During the early years, they focused on expanding the grain farming through sprinkler irrigation. Cool season grasses under irrigation also allowed the expansion of the family cow-calf operation. In the 1970s, he started retaining ownership of the calf crop through a commercial feedlot and began marketing on the rail.

Today, Triangle H has two farm feedyards and primarily markets its cattle through U.S. Premium Beef, which they invested in as a founding member. Over the years, Triangle H has performed custom heifer breeding projects, developed breeding bulls, backgrounding and finishing cattle. The farm produces irrigated corn, soybeans, grain sorghum, wheat and alfalfa in Finney, Kearney and Haskell counties with grassland in Clark County. The cow-calf portion of the operation has expanded into satellite herds throughout Kansas and neighboring states. The farm produces many of the ingredients needed in the feedyard.

Sam strives to be a good steward of the land and to engage in sound animal husbandry practices. He focuses on working to optimize pounds of commodity produced and gaining extra market value through a higher quality product. He believes it's about converting rain and sunshine into a desirable and nutritious product for the consumer.

Hands has been an industry leader, serving as Beef Empire Days and Finney County Farm Bureau president. He was one of the original six delegates on the Cattleman's Beef Board to develop the Beef Checkoff program. His special interest in the Kansas Beef Council led him to serve as vice chairman. He has also served as chairman of the KSU LMIC and is now serving on the LMIC Royal Board. Currently, he serves on the Kansas FFA Foundation board, Finney County Economic Development Committee and Beef Empire Days board.

In 1978, Sam was named the Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Rancher of the Year. He has received the BIF Commercial Producer of the Year Award, Honorary Member and Outstanding Stockman from the KSU Block & Bridle Club, KSU ASI Distinguished Alumni Award, Honorary Finney County 4-H Alumni Award and was made an Honorary Chapter Farmer of the Garden City FFA. Triangle H was named the Certified Angus Beef Progressive Partner of the Year in 2010, and has also received the Beef Empire Days Earl C. Brookover Award nine times in the past 26 years.

Sam and his wife, Janet, have three children — Marisa, Quincy and Rebecca — and two grandsons.