

## The Environmental Stewardship Awards (TESA) Update

With the COVID-19 pandemic and physical distancing edicts in place, some provincial associations either did not have summer meetings or were unable to award their provincial Environmental Stewardship Awards. However, four provincial recipients were named and Environment Committee Chair and CCA staff decided to go ahead with a two-event online showcase and awards ceremony.

CCA had nominees from Ontario – Charlton Angus Cattle Company, Paul De Jong, Temiskaming District; Manitoba – Hagan Ranch, Thomas and Felicity Hagan, Oak Lake; Alberta – Deer Creek Livestock Company, Richard Visser, James Bekkering, Kyle Turner and Jeff Smith, near Milk River; and, B.C. – Woodjam Ranch, the Seelhof family (Ricky, Chad, Riata, Renee, Cooper, Louis and Ellie), of Horsefly.

CCA began running profiles of each of the provincial nominees in the Action News Blog in mid-June. The nominees also took the opportunity for an online media training session, which will be an event each year going forward as it helps orient the nominees to tell their stories in an interview format. On July 29 we held a virtual introduction and showcase event promoting each of our nominees and their stewardship accomplishments. Select media were invited, as were stakeholders and provincial managers. Attendance and outcomes were positive.

After thoughtful evaluation and discussion the TESA judges selected the Seelhof family and their Woodjam Ranch as the 2020 TESA recipient. Of their many accolades the Seelhof family were acknowledged for their hard work and diligence in protecting the many riparian areas and flowing waters around the ranch. The award was presented by Environment Committee chair Duane Thompson during the 2020 virtual Canadian Beef Industry Conference (CBIC) in August. Despite the unusual circumstances surrounding the online nature of the presentation, there was good national media coverage of the awards and the recipients.

Looking ahead, 2021 marks the 25th anniversary of CCA's TESA. For this milestone significant enhancements are being undertaken to not only mark the occasion but to increase the profile of the award. This includes greater regional interest in getting nominees and increased general awareness amongst politicians, bureaucrats and the general public regarding the significant stewardship activities of Canada's beef cattle producers as well as the environmental benefits of beef cattle production in the Canadian context.

Enhancements include a revised and expanded communication strategy, alignment with conservation groups as foundational champions of the award, bolstering the judging structure and process and revisions to the eligibility for nomination to better include certain regions of the country. These enhancements will be complete in the first quarter of 2021. Presently, the plan is to present the 2021 TESA live during the CBIC scheduled held August 17-19, 2021.

## TESA - 2020 Provincial Recipients

### **Hagan Valley Ranch**

Thomas and Felicity Hagan  
*Oak Lake, MB*

**Manitoba Beef Producers**  
*Environmental Stewardship Award recipient*



### **Deer Creek Ranch**

Deer Creek Livestock Co. Ltd.  
(Richard Visser, James Bekkering, Kyle Turner and Jeff Smith)  
*Milk River, AB*

**Alberta Beef Producers**  
*Environmental Stewardship Award recipient*



### **Charlton Angus Cattle Company**

Paul De Jong  
*Temiskaming District, ON*

**Beef Farmers of Ontario**  
*Environmental Stewardship Award recipient*



The CCA thanks our TESA Platinum Sponsor MNP for making this award possible.

To learn more about the significant contributions of past TESA winners, please visit: [cattle.ca/sustainability/the-environmental-stewardship-award/](https://cattle.ca/sustainability/the-environmental-stewardship-award/)



TESA - 2020 National Recipient



Woodjam Ranch, near Horsefly, British Columbia (B.C.), was the recipient of the 2020 The Environmental Stewardship Award (TESA). Woodjam Ranch is owned and operated by Ricky and Chad Seelhof along with their children Riata, Cooper and Renee. The couple purchased the ranch in 2013 from Chad's parents who had owned the property since 2003.

The Seelhof Family runs a 500-head black Angus cow/calf business on 2120 acres of cultivated and native rangeland in association with 80,000 acres of crown grazing license area. This ranch family feels it is their responsibility to steward the land.

"Judging a recipient for this year's TESA proved, as it always does, to be difficult due to the very impressive slate of nominees," says Duane Thompson, Chair of CCA's Environment Committee. "What stood out with the Seelhof family and their Woodjam Ranch was the extraordinary work they've done on enhancing and improving the many riparian areas on their operation. In addition, they have shared their stewardship experiences and encouraged other producers to do likewise, that's very impressive and good for our industry."

Woodjam Ranch is in the heart of the province's Cariboo region and lies adjacent to the Horsefly River and has 16 tributary creeks running through it. Ensuring these waterways maintain their health is paramount. The Seelhofs focus on planting a lot of willow, and work on riverbank restoration to prevent the significant spring flooding the ranch is subject to due to riverbank erosion.

Working in partnership with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Seelhof Family has installed eight large off-river watering systems and added in-ground piping. Furthermore, they continue to develop pasture in higher areas to keep cattle off the flood prone riparian areas.

Thompson highlighted that the TESA judges recognize the exceptional commitment of all nominees in bringing innovative conservation solutions to their operations that protect the environment and wildlife around them.

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