

News from University of Missouri Extension – Adair County

Robert Perry Named Northeast Missouri Livestock Person of the Year

Robert N. Perry will be recognized December 2, 2011, as the Northeast Missouri Livestock Person of the Year. He will be presented the award during the Missouri Livestock Symposium at the Kirksville Middle School in Kirksville, Mo.

Perry has been an active livestock producer and an advocate for quality livestock production in Northeast Missouri his entire life. His dedication and service to the community, region and state represent the essence of the award, which honors livestock leaders from Northeast Missouri who have made significant contributions to the progress and well-being of the livestock industry.

“Selected by performance, evaluated by comparison” is the foundation motto for the success of Perry Farms (<http://www.perrypurebreds.com/index.html>). The success stories started long before Bob and Kathleen met.

Bob grew up on a 130-acre farm in Shelby County, Mo. His mother died of an infection following surgery for appendicitis in 1934. Bob was 2 years old. Raising six children on the farm didn't allow his father to pay for everything his children wanted to do. However, Bob grew up with a lot of love and all of the support he could have needed.

With his father's encouragement, Bob and his brother, John, entered a program for young boys sponsored by a prominent Missouri lawyer, W.G. Lewellen. Lewellen owned a farm in the country and supported young men who wanted to raise purebred hogs. He provided the boys with bred sows to raise on their own farm, then purchased pigs from the boys, paying incentives for weight gain. Lewellen allowed the boys to keep every third gilt from each litter to start their own herds.

Bob's hard work paid off when he made enough money to buy his first boar. Bob enjoyed judging livestock in high school and entered numerous picture judging contests.

When he was a senior in high school, he won a Farmall Cub tractor in a Kellogg Seed Company Contest. Bob sold the tractor to his father in exchange for a college education. His father always encouraged him to go to college and obtain a solid education.

While at the University of Missouri (MU), Bob worked at the RG barn (retarded growth experimental barn) while working toward a bachelor's degree in animal husbandry. He was on the 1952 livestock judging team. As an individual, he placed second at the Chicago International and third at both the American Royal and the National Western.

Bob spent four years in ROTC at MU. After graduation he spent three years as a copilot on a B-47 in the U.S. Air Force.

Bob's father took care of his hogs while he was in college and in the service. When Bob returned home, his dad provided him with 10 Duroc gilts to start his new herd.

Meanwhile, Russell Moore, a vocational agriculture teacher, and his family moved from Iowa to Shelby County. Russell was respected by many for his willingness to help local livestock judging teams. He raised purebred Duroc hogs and registered Angus cattle on the 480-acre farm he purchased. His daughter, Kathleen, worked with the cattle and the hogs.

Kathleen enrolled at MU and received several scholarships. However, while on her senior trip, her father drowned while working cattle. Since Kathleen was the oldest of two girls, this made it difficult for her to continue her college education. Already in the Air Force, Bob wrote a letter of encouragement to Kathleen, which started a long-distance relationship.

A good friend, Clyde Barrick, offered to assist Kathleen's family so she could attend MU and they could keep the farming operation. After two years studying home economics while Bob was in the Air Force,

Kathleen left school. She and Bob were married June 15, 1957.

With a strong desire to farm and raise purebred livestock, Bob and Kathleen moved to her family's farm at Bethel and entered into a partnership with Kathleen's mother, Martha Moore. The young couple purchased six Duroc gilts and a boar to add to the 10 gilts that Bob's father had given him to form the basis of their herd.

They started their registered Angus herd with a herd of 19 cows that Kathleen had started with a cow her grandfather had given her to start her 4-H project. This continues a registered Angus herd that was started in 1922.

As a biosecurity measure to protect the health of their herd and the herds of their customers, the Perrys maintain a closed cow herd. New bloodlines are added using artificial insemination (AI). They submit Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®) — including birth, weaning and yearling weights; and ultrasound measurements — to attain expected progeny differences (EPDs) for each trait. Their herd is selected to satisfy customers seeking calving-ease bulls with high weaning and yearling weights.

Their Angus bull "Perry Power Design 715" holds the record as the top-selling bull in the NEMO Beef Cattle Improvement Association (BCIA) Performance Tested Bull Sale. Purchased by ABS Global, he ranks in the top 10% of the Angus breed for \$B and calving-ease direct EPD. The NEMO BCIA named Bob its Outstanding Seedstock Producer in 2007.

The Perrys are well-known for their leadership in performance testing in the swine industry. Bob served on the boards of the National Swine Improvement Federation (NSIF) and the Missouri Swine Improvement Federation (MSIF). These performance-oriented organizations established central boar test stations to measure feed efficiency, rate of gain, loin-eye area, and backfat in order to provide comparisons between bloodlines.

Bob served on the boards of the University of Missouri (MU) and Northeast Missouri (NEMO) swine test stations for many years. At the 100th MU test sale, Bob was honored for testing the most pens (54).

In 1970, Bob was instrumental in the MSIF's decision to purchase an ultrasound machine and to hire a technician to travel the state to gather loin eye and backfat data for MSIF members in order to establish EPDs for the carcass traits.

Bob has had three Duroc Hog College™ boars at the National Barrow Show. He has shown a plethora of champions at type conferences, state fairs and national shows. In addition, the Perrys have sold purebred hogs throughout the United States and internationally, including Canada, Mexico, the Philippines, Japan and Korea.

In addition to welcoming 4-H, FFA and collegiate teams to their farm for livestock judging practices, the Perrys have provided hogs for intercollegiate and FFA livestock judging contests at the American Royal since the 1960s. And Bob has served as an official judge for the collegiate contest.

Every 4-H and FFA show or collegiate judging contest, whether on the farm or at a national show, provides an opportunity to interact and to teach the young men and women who will be future leaders in the livestock industry. While miles away from home, the Perrys frequently meet someone who will say, “Yes, we know where you live. We were at your place for a livestock judging workout.”

Bob has received the Missouri Pork Producers Master Seed Stock Producer, Outstanding Pork Producer and Missouri Pork All-American, Livestock Leadership Award (Livestock Industry-Missouri Youth Workshop), American Royal Farm Family of the Year, and the Missouri Angus Pioneer Award.

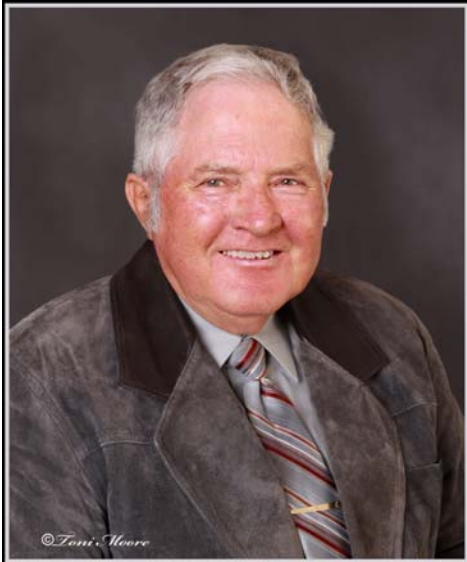
A few of Bob’s national awards include FFA American Farmer degree, FFA Honorary American Farmer, American Royal Grand Champion Barrow, National Pork All-American, *National Hog Farmer* Outstanding Service Award, NSIF Achievement Award in Swine Performance Testing, National Duroc Special Test Station Award, and World Pork Expo Master Seedstock Producer.

Bob and Kathleen have four children. Jim and his wife, Paula, live on the home farm and continue the purebred livestock operation; Lindall is a dermatologist in Columbia; Michael is a Christian minister; and Eunice is vice president of product development at Landrum Bank at Columbia.

The Perrys are active in their local community. Bob served as president of the North Shelby School Board for 18 years. Bob and Kathleen are members of the Bethel Christian Church, where Bob served as an elder for many years.

Realizing that youth are the future of the ag industry, Bob continues to encourage youth to participate in production agriculture, serving as a mentor, a booster, a sponsor and an employer.

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