



Lightseys Named ESAP Winner

News release provided by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

Lightsey Family of Lake Wales, Fla., is named the 15th annual National Environmental Stewardship Award winner.

DENVER, CO (Feb. 2, 2006) — Lightsey Cattle Co. is the 2005 Environmental Stewardship Award Program (ESAP) National Winner, officially announced Feb. 2 by the ESAP Selection Committee.

In the summer of 2005, the Lightsey family was initially chosen as one of seven regional winners, representing the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA)'s Region II. The prestigious award program sponsored by NCBA, Dow AgroSciences and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is now in its 15th year.

"For generations, the Lightsey family has made extensive and innovative efforts to preserve their thousands of acres of pristine natural landscapes in the Lake Wales, Florida, area," explained Stacey Katseanes, coordinator of the program for NCBA. "They are proactively involved in raising national awareness about the importance of land conservation, reaching out directly to educate even the urban folks and working intently with conservation groups. We see them as current and future role models in the industry."

"Being in central Florida, this operation has increasingly faced the

pressures of urban sprawl and they fought back to keep the land intact and make land preservation a top priority," said NCBA President and Texas cattle producer Jim McAdams. "The family is a vocal advocate for preserving and enhancing cattle producers' way of life. Touring their operation, you will find an amazing abundance of wildlife. For example, the bald eagle population has increased hundred-fold and, as a result, some nest eggs have been transported for repopulation efforts."

About the ranch

Lightsey Cattle Co., nominated for the award by the Florida Cattlemen's Association, is a diverse operation with three separately located ranches. Daily undertakings include managing a cow-calf operation and preconditioning feedlot, tending to citrus groves and timber cutting, and guiding guests on hunting and ecological tours of the ranches. The land has been with the family since the mid-1800s.

The ranches consist of 60% improved grasses and 40% native grasses. Some of the conservation systems implemented include rotational grazing, harvesting overgrown timber, guided hunting

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to control wildlife populations, deep-ditch water systems, and controlled pasture burning. Most notably, the Lightseys have helped to protect and restore 28 endangered species that live on their ranches.

“The Lightsey family is held in the highest regard by the conservation communities in the state of Florida. The family’s actions to work with state and federal agencies and nonprofit organizations to help conserve their land for future generations are exemplary,” said Hilary Swain, executive director of Archbold Biological Station, an independent, nonprofit organization specializing in long-term ecological research and conservation in Central Florida.

For many years, members of the Lightsey family have worked with a wide-ranging list of environmental agencies and organizations on environmental stewardship projects. The list includes the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Florida Division of Forestry, University of Florida Extension Service, the Nature Conservancy and Green Horizon. They host environmental groups on

the ranch, give ecological tours and participate in conservation efforts with the Florida Cattlemen’s Association, Florida CattleWomen’s Inc. and more.

“The Lightseys are unquestionably leaders in the area of maintaining the ranching culture while looking for innovative ways to ensure the ranches remain economically viable and environmentally sustainable,” stated James Murrian, director of conservation and stewardship at the Nature Conservancy. “The Lightseys conduct their lives and manage their ranching operations according to a simple yet profound ethic: “The right thing for the land is the right thing for business, humanity, and all creatures and creation.”

“The long-standing commitment of the Lightsey family to preserve and protect their land has allowed the family’s ranches to increase productivity while protecting the environment,” said Katseanes. “We are very pleased to announce their national award recognition tonight.”

For additional information on the Lightsey family, contact NCBA’s Washington, D.C., office at (202) 347-0228.



Editor’s Note This release is adapted from a news release distributed by the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association. For the original release, go to www.beefusa.org.