

## **Grass Master & Okla. Sec. of Agriculture Spark Interest in Argentine Breeder's Minds Offspring displayed in Genex Tour; Jim Reese speaks to Agriculture's importance**

Ratcliff Ranch was a part of a multi-state tour that was a joint venture between Genex and a major semen distributor in Argentina. Nearly 50 people, including the Argentines, Genex representatives and various legislative staff members joined Ratcliff Ranch to see first-hand the results of the genetic and phenotype footprint that Grass Master is leaving on his progeny.

The group was met by a driveway lined with flags from both Argentina and the U.S. The tour began with a brief welcome from Ratcliff Ranch followed immediately by a field trip to the Blackwell facility located just outside Vinita. This premier livestock handling facility was designed by well-known animal behavior specialist Temple Grandin. The Argentines and guests watched as the cowboys worked through a set of cows in a quick and quiet fashion.

"Building the Blackwell working facility was one of the best investments we have ever made. By handling our cattle in a humane and calm manner allows us to have higher conception rates during breeding, less trauma and stress to the animal at working time and ultimately leads to more dollars in our pocket," said Ratcliff Ranch Owner Jim Ratcliff.

Upon returning to the RR headquarters, the group was able to truly see the impact of Grass Master through both his daughters and sons that were on display. Representatives from Sinclair Cattle Company and Ratcliff Ranch were available to answer specific performance questions including the remarkable carcass data his first progeny to be graded have turned in.

Following the viewing of the Grass Master progeny, the group was introduced to the Heritage Ranch program and Unger Meat through a multi-course dinner. This dinner featured some of the fine meat available through this premier source and age verified program prepared by Unger Meat Executive Chef Damion Tittle. The chef prepared meals local in flavor to Argentina. Heritage Ranch Brand Director of Cattle Operations and Ratcliff Ranch Advisor Billy Hall spoke to the group about the premiums available and the quality of the cattle that are a part of Heritage Ranch program.

In addition, he also talked about the ability to trace food from the hoof to the plate, as well as the marketing opportunities to available to ranchers participating in this program. Restaurants and grocers have the ability to "tell the story" of the ranch through various promotional items and menu inserts. Each box has detailed traceability through a unique bar code that can be scanned. This bar code will identify the exact ranch that produced the cattle that will be served.

The evening concluded with featured speaker Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture Jim Reese. Recently appointed by Gov. Mary Fallin, Reese has previous experience at a national level with the USDA. He spoke on the importance of agriculture in general as well as its direct impact in Oklahoma. "Some industries in Oklahoma just pass around money to each other; but agriculture actually creates money by producing food and fiber," Reese said. He also stated that the possibility of increased exports of cattle and beef genetics is good for Oklahoma.

"Oklahoma is the second-largest producer of beef cows in the nation at a little more than 2 million head, and we are the fourth largest producer in the nation of cattle and calves at 5.4 million head, said Associate Agriculture Commissioner Blayne Arthur.

The evening concluded with Ratcliff Ranch owner Jim Ratcliff and Sec. Reese presenting each of the Argentines with an "Honorary Oklahoma Rancher" Certificate and a hat token of the state and the ranch.

"It was a true pleasure to show-off our Grass Master progeny and to interact with the Argentine breeders. It is

something we look forward to doing more in the future. The opportunities for Ratcliff Ranch and our customers through our genetics and new affiliation with Heritage Ranch are very exciting,” said Ratcliff.