



Thursday, 23 September 2021

MEDIA RELEASE

2021 Rising Champions announced

Cattle Council of Australia and National Australia Bank (NAB) have today announced the seven state and territory winners of the 2021 CCA NAB Agribusiness Rising Champion Initiative.

Now in its eleventh year, the program is designed to foster the leadership and business skills of emerging beef industry leaders aged between 21-40.

The 2021 winners are:

- Annie Pumpa, Table Top, New South Wales
- Kari-Melise Moffat, Darwin, Northern Territory
- Sam Fryer, Prairie, Queensland
- Tom Cosentino, Port Elliot, South Australia
- Stafford Ives-Heres, Marrawah, Tasmania
- Jen Smith, East Gippsland, Victoria
- Tamara Pfitzner, Gidgegannup, Western Australia

With all of this year's winners already actively involved in the beef industry, the program presents an unrivalled opportunity for the group to take their personal career development to the next level and network with industry and government representatives.

NAB Executive Regional and Agribusiness, Julie Rynski, congratulated the winners and said it was exciting to see the calibre of talent the Rising Champions program attracted once again in 2021.

"Year in and year out, the Rising Champions Initiative attracts some of the best and brightest young people in the beef industry, and this year has been no exception," Ms Rynski said.

"The 2021 cohort represents such a diverse set of skills and aspirations, and the group leaves me with no doubt the future of the Australian cattle industry is in very good hands.

"NAB is delighted to have been involved in bringing such a unique group of talent together, and I congratulate all the winners on their significant achievement in being named Rising Champions."

Cattle Council President, Markus Rathsmann, said the program would give the winners a unique insight into industry leadership and policy development.

For 160 years, we've been helping our customers with their money. Today, we have more than 30,000 people serving nine million customers at more than 900 locations in Australia, New Zealand and around the world. As Australia's largest business bank, we work with small, medium and large businesses to help them start, run and grow. We fund some of the most important infrastructure in our communities – including schools, hospitals and roads. And we do it in a way that's responsible, inclusive and innovative. You can find out more about how NAB backs our community by visiting: nab.com.au/backingcommunities

“We had a lot of outstanding candidates put their hands up this year and every winner truly deserves their spot,” Mr Rathsmann said.

“They represent all parts of the country and all parts of the supply chain, which is vital to a unified beef industry.

“I’m proud we have an industry that can produce candidates of such high calibre, and that we can give them another boost through the NAB Agribusiness Rising Champions Initiative.

“Cattle Council thanks all applicants, and encourages those who didn’t make it this time, to stick with it and throw their hat in the ring again next year.”

The seven state and territory winners will attend an all-expenses paid Leadership Development week in Canberra planned for 22-25 November this year, pending COVID-19 restrictions.

The program is supported by gold sponsor NAB Agribusiness, media sponsor Australian Community Media, Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) as well as Cattle Council’s state farming organisations members.

Winner biographies (click on names for high-res photos):

Annie Pumpa, Table Top, New South Wales

Based at Table Top in southern NSW, Annie is a Beef Sales and Beef InFocus Supply Chain Manager with ABS Global Australia, working with beef producers to improve their productivity and profitability through genetic progress.

A passionate advocate for youth in agriculture, she is currently Chair of the Angus Australia Round Up Committee, President of the National Hereford Youth Committee, and an active participant in cattle showing at agricultural shows.

Annie holds a Certificate II in Agriculture and is passionate about supporting capacity building programs for young people in the industry.

Kari-Melise Moffat, Darwin, Northern Territory

Having worked in the livestock export industry for the past seven years, Kari is currently the Animal Welfare Assurance Manager with AUSTREX, based in Darwin.

She is also Chair and Co-Founder of the Young Livestock Exporters Network (YLEN) and is passionate about developing the next generation of leaders in the live export supply chain.

Kari holds both a Bachelor of Business (Agriculture) from Marcus Oldham College and a Foundations of Directorship Certificate from the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Sam Fryer, Prairie, Queensland

Sam is a grassfed beef producer, based near Hughenden, Queensland. He also works as Northern Accounts Manager for beef data analysis business, Black Box Co, which uses data collected by beef producers to develop insights into beef herds and businesses.

Sam and his wife Emily have three children, and he is an advocate for creating supported pathways into the industry for young people and supporting mental health awareness in rural communities.

He is also studying a Bachelor of Agribusiness through the University of New England, majoring in finance, marketing and management.

Tom Cosentino, Port Elliot, South Australia

Tom works as an Executive Officer for both Livestock SA and the SA Dairy Industry Fund and runs a small farm in the Hindmarsh Valley with his wife, Aimee, producing Murray Grey cattle.

Having been born and raised in the city, but with a lifelong fascination for agriculture, Tom hopes to use the experience he gains through the Rising Champions Initiative to positively contribute to building the pipeline of talent in agriculture, and specifically the cattle sector.

Tom holds both a Bachelor of Commerce and a Bachelor of Laws from University of Adelaide.

Stafford Ives-Heres, Marrawah, Tasmania

Stafford is a fourth-generation beef producer from far north-west Tasmania, running 400 Angus breeders and share-farming and managing a neighbouring cattle property.

He is also a Councillor on the Circular Head Council, having been elected when he was just 23 years old.

Stafford is passionate about representing young people in his region and developing pathways for young farmers to enter and grow their careers in agriculture.

Jen Smith, East Gippsland, Victoria

Jen owns and operates a beef production enterprise near Bairnsdale, in East Gippsland and is the General Manager of Gippsland Agricultural Group, a producer-led group which operates the Gippsland Research Farm, trialling and demonstrating projects to assist the region's producers to unlock their production potential.

Jen's region and farm was devastated by the 2020 Black Summer bushfires, and she has played a major role in helping the region recover and rebuild.

She holds a Cert IV in Youth Development, a Diploma in Conservation and Land Management and an Associate Degree in Environmental Science. She is currently completing her MBA through Federation University.

Tamara Pfitzner, Gidgegannup, Western Australia

Tamara grew up on small black Angus farm in Naracoorte, South Australia, before moving to Gidgegannup in Western Australia, where she now runs her own beef herd with her partner.

After working in a range of key industry roles in the livestock export sector, including as a live export compliance manager in Australia and in export markets, Tamara is continuing her passion for animal welfare through her own rural contracting and consulting business, specialising in the livestock export sector.

She is currently working in conjunction with technology development companies to trial and implement new remote auditing systems and automated track and traceability systems within Australia for livestock.

For further information:

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