

Press Release



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Yolo Land & Cattle Company Wins Environmental Stewardship Award

RENO, NEV. – The California Cattlemen's Association (CCA), California Rangeland Trust (CRT) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are excited to announce that the Hank Stone Family from Yolo Land & Cattle Company, Winters, Calif., was announced as the 2008 Environmental Stewardship Award national winner on Thursday, Feb. 7th at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Annual Convention in Reno.

“The Stone family is a tremendous asset to the cattle industry, serving as leaders in beef production, rangeland conservation and natural resources enhancement,” CCA President Bruce Hafenfeld said. “Their legacy of environmental stewardship exemplifies the commitment of ranchers throughout the state who manage California's open spaces, water sheds and wildlife habitat.”

Supporters and active members of the California agriculture community, Yolo Land & Cattle Company was originally nominated by CCA and CRT for NCBA's Region VI Environmental Stewardship Award, which the Stone family won, putting them in the company of five other beef cattle operations for the national award.

“It is so rewarding to work with conservationists like the Stones,” says Lincoln “Ed” Burton, State Conservationist for NRCS. “They are big picture people and their work and its results carries benefits across two watersheds and their easement and ethics mean that their efforts will transcend time.”

Hank and Suzanne Stone, owners of Yolo Land and Cattle, along with their sons—Scott and Casey Stone and

their wives, Karen and Angela Stone have made it a family goal to continually enhance and improve their ranching operation while involving the community. Their efforts have brought together their neighbors, surrounding school children, Audubon California and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, NRCS and other state and local organizations and agencies. Their vegetative management program has become California's largest for the purpose of conducting annual spring grass burns and fall brush burns on a total of 45,000 acres in western Yolo County.

"This is exciting, especially when it happens to a friend in our own back yard," said Devere Dressler, CRT board chairman. "The Stone's are a tremendous example of how California ranchers are using innovative techniques to maintain the viability of their ranching operation while using existing ranching practices to protect and enhance the natural environment. The partnerships they have created help insure that ranchers keep ranching and their stewardship continues."

The Stone family's operation fully lives up to its management philosophy, "Take care of the land and the land will take care of you." In addition to vegetative management, a few of the projects that Yolo Land & Cattle Co. has implemented on their ranch and their Landlords' ranches include cross-fencing of pastures, fencing of ponds and riparian areas, planting of native grasses, trees and shrubs, rotational grazing, grazing on CRP lands and invasive weed control.

"We are very honored to have been chosen for this award by the judges, NCBA, NRCS, and Dow Agri-sciences. Through the ESAP process we have had the ability to see first-hand what a great job ranchers are doing across America to manage their lands in an environmentally beneficial and sustainable manner. This award helps showcase what we can achieve with our many partners in being true caretakers of the land, and the continued value of keeping ranchers on the land and having a viable ranching industry in California and the USA," Scott Stone said after reflecting on the honor.

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Founded in 1917, the California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) represents California's 1.35 billion-dollar beef cattle industry on legislative and regulatory affairs and remains the number one voice for the industry today. CCA is an affiliate of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, which represents America's cattle farmers and ranchers.

