



**Canadian Cattlemen's Association**

## **News Release**

August 12, 2002

### **Historic BC Ranch Wins Environmental Stewardship Award**

The philosophy of leaving the land in better condition for the next generation takes on new meaning when the family has been ranching that land for over 130 years. The winners of the eighth annual national Environmental Stewardship Award for cow-calf producers are the Guichon family of Gerard Guichon Ranch Ltd., Quilchena BC. The award was presented on August 8 at the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) Semi-Annual Meeting and Convention in Winnipeg, MB. With the generous support of Merial Canada, the Environmental Stewardship Award is presented each year to a Canadian cattle producer doing a particularly outstanding job of protecting and enhancing the environment.

The original Guichon ranch in the Nicola Valley of southern British Columbia was started in the late 1860's by Lawrence Guichon. In 1979 Laurie and Judy Guichon became the fourth generation to manage the farm. The Guichons adopted holistic resource management principles, which the family carried on following Laurie's untimely death in 1999.

Water developments and the establishment of electric fencing have allowed the division of extensive grasslands into manageable pastures. This enables the use of a successful short duration grazing system. Each spring they plan the movements of cattle between pastures. Included in this plan are needs of nesting ducks and sharptail grouse. Re-routing the cattle to another pasture in a timely fashion to protect wildlife habitat is an important consideration.

The herd size is adjusted based on the weather and amount of grass available. By doing this, the ranch is able to graze the cattle for from 290 to 300 days a year rather than relying on hay or other feed. Each pasture is given a rest period to allow the grasslands proper recovery time.

Gerard Guichon Ranch supports efforts to preserve the burrowing owl, a species at risk. Their ranch is one of the sites where artificial burrows were established to hatch young burrowing owls that were later banded and released. Owls reared on the ranch have been re-introduced to grasslands throughout British Columbia.

The national Environmental Stewardship Award winner is selected from the winners of stewardship awards presented by provincial cattle associations. Other nominees this year were Don and Carol Curtice of Innisfail, Alberta; Murray and Selena McGillivray of Radville, Saskatchewan; Tony and Debbie McMechan of Pierson, Manitoba; and Chris and Carrie Knott of Clarksburg, Ontario.

This is the third year of a successful partnership between CCA and Merial Canada to recognize and promote excellence in environmental management in the cow-calf sector of the Canadian cattle industry. Merial is an international animal health company with a focus on the development of products to keep livestock and pets healthy and productive. Merial is a Merck and Aventis company.

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*CCA is the National Voice for the Beef Cattle Industry, representing over 90,000 Cattle Producers*