2016 AABP–Boehringer Ingelheim Bovine Practitioner of the Year

Dr. Frank Schenkels (center) receives the Bovine Practitioner of the Year Award from Dr. Rob Tremblay (left) and Dr. Doug Ensley.

Dr. Doug Ensley, Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health, described the AABP–Boehringer Ingelheim Bovine Practitioner of the Year Award. “The Bovine Practitioner of the Year Award has been awarded annually since its establishment in 1978. Since its inception, this award has been sponsored by Syntex Animal Health, Fort Dodge Animal Health, and now Boehringer Ingelheim. The award consists of a diamond ring and commemorative plaque. The award winner exhibits those qualities that exemplify the AABP and its members. Candidates are evaluated on the following criteria:

• Must be a bovine practitioner in active practice;
• The quality of veterinary service provided as judged by his or her peers;
• Participation in organized veterinary medicine, such as AABP, as well as activity on veterinary boards, such as licensing, specialty, etc.;
• Contribution to the knowledge of the profession through case reports, scientific reports and continuing education; and,
• Achievements and activities which have an impact on the cattle industry and bovine practice.

On behalf of Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health, I would like to express our appreciation for allowing us to participate in recognizing one of your outstanding members. To present the winner of the 2016 AABP–Boehringer Ingelheim Bovine Practitioner of the Year Award, please welcome Dr. Rob Tremblay.

“Frank was raised on a dairy farm in New Brunswick. He attended the Ontario Veterinary College where I heard about him first, and then was fortunate enough to meet him. He graduated in 1986 and practiced in Peterborough, Ontario. Rumor has it that on his resume for that first job, he listed his pastimes as “Wine, Women and Song”.

After a short time at Peterborough, Frank accepted a job closer to the family home in the large dairy production area of central Nova Scotia, where he has practiced for just about 30 years. While in practice, he completed the Dairy Health Management Certificate Series at OVC, finishing in 1994.

His enthusiasm for clinical practice and his boundless energy have helped improve the lives of his dairy clients and of their animals, not to mention improving the profitability of their farms too. It is always a pleasure to hear him enthusiastically share the ideas he has for his clients’ farms, and how they in turn help him to see the range of practical applications of those ideas.

Not content just with helping individual farmers, he has worked to improve the lives of dairy farmers, the health of dairy cows, and dairy productivity throughout the Maritimes and beyond. He has helped organize the annual Dairy Focus conference, and been a member of the advisory committees for Maritime Quality Milk and the Atlantic Johne’s Disease Initiative. At a national level, he is a long serving member of the technical committee of the Food Safety component of proAction (formerly CQM) for the Dairy Farmers of Canada.

Frank was instrumental in the founding of the Atlantic Bovine Practitioner’s Association (ABPA) in 2000. He has served numerous roles on the executive of the ABPA, including sitting as CE chair and conference co-organizer for almost 15 years. He has also served on the executive board of the Canadian Association of Bovine Veterinarians, and was its president in 2014.

He lectures on dairy production at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College and Atlantic Veterinary College.

Frank is the paragon of Franklin’s phrase, “If you want something done, ask a busy person”.

Frank and his wife Luanne have made their home near Truro, Nova Scotia, where they enjoy all that life has to offer with their daughter and two sons. Ladies and gentlemen, please help me recognize the 2016 AABP–Boehringer Ingelheim Bovine Practitioner of the Year, Dr. Frank Schenkels!”
Dr. Steve Foulke, Merial, described the awards. “The awards were established in 1982, and consist of a $1,500 general scholarship contribution made in the name of the recipient to his/her veterinary college of choice and a specifically designed plaque given to the recipient. The awards recognize individual member practitioners or practices that have developed outstanding preventive medicine programs. One award is given to recognize an outstanding program for beef production and another is given to an outstanding program in dairy production. We, at Merial, are proud to have been the sponsor of this award for the last 35 years, and wish to congratulate the 2016 winners.”

Beef Award

Dr. Tom Portillo (left) received the AABP-Merial Award for Excellence in Preventive Medicine - Beef from Dr. Bob Smith.

Dr. Bob Smith introduced the 2016 beef award recipient. “We have had the pleasure of knowing and interacting with this award winner for 20+ years. He has a passion for the veterinary profession, especially beef production medicine. His evidence-based approach to production medicine is respected by our entire practice group, clients, and other veterinary colleagues. He spends an inordinate amount of time gathering data to make science-based recommendations. He is especially talented at training the feedlot crews that he works with, including pen riders, hospital crews (including strong emphasis on judicious drug use), and processing crews, including their impact on beef quality assurance, food safety, and animal well-being, and teaches them the importance of their job to the cattle owners, the animal, the consumer, and to the long-term sustainability of the beef cattle industry. He measures progress, and holds himself and feedlot crews accountable for their job performance; I have seen the health outcome numbers generated in his clients’ feedyards, and they rank the best in the industry. He takes a stand on controversial issues, but will listen to others and consider their opinions. He is active in the AVC, AABP, and cattlemen’s groups, and is presently President of the AVC. He is a long-time member of the AABP, and has served as Program Chair for Feedlot Sessions at the Annual Conference, a speaker, and has served on committees as well. He is a highly respected leader in the veterinary profession and the beef industry, and no doubt will continue to make significant contributions in the years to come. He has been in general practice, industry, and feedlot practice, and is currently the staff veterinarian for a top ten multi-feedlot company headquartered in Amarillo, Texas, that keeps over 300,000 head of cattle on feed. Without a doubt, he is the type of veterinarian that exemplifies the high standards set for those honored as the AABP-Merial Excellence in Preventive Medicine-Beef Award winner!!

To illustrate some balance in his life, I’d like to share a note from his wife:

“Bob called to let our family know about you receiving this award and asked us to say a few things about you as a veterinarian, but more importantly, as a husband and father. So the kids and I have come up with a few insights about you that most likely won’t come as a surprise to anyone since you are one of the most transparent people we know; what you see is what you get.

We have long observed that you are passionate about whom and what you hold dear, the first and foremost being your love of God and your Catholic faith, and us, your wife and children. We have never known a time when you
couldn’t be counted on to support us whether in spirit, mind, or body. We admire your ability to manage your time with endless hours of paperwork after spending 10 hours in the feed yard, yet still able to get in a run or swim because you know that’s what is best for your body, not to mention your usual list of “Honey-Do’s” too. Your competitive spirit drives all of those near you to strive for their own excellence. We admire how you hold in high regard those who keep feed yards running, and do so with respect, be it in management, the mill, the pen rider or even the tank washer or the guy that mows the grass. We know you would never ask anyone to do anything you wouldn’t be willing to do as well.

We, as your family, feel honored that your peers see these attributes in you too. As an advocate in the beef industry, you always strive to do what is best for the business without thinking of your personal gain. Your fervor for what you do sometimes leads to emails sent before you count to ten, (Hon, you need to count to ten!) but that’s just who you are, and we thank you for that. Congratulations on this award, you deserve it as we know how hard you work at what you do. This honor demonstrates how your industry recognizes your work as well. As your youngest daughter exclaims, Dad, you’re awesmazing!”

Folks, how can I add anything to that! Please help me congratulate the 2016 AABP-Merial Excellence in Preventive Veterinary Medicine - Beef Award winner, Dr. Tom Portillo.”
AABP–Merial Award of Excellence in Preventive Veterinary Medicine

Dairy Award

Dr. Greg Crosley (center) received the AABP–Merial Award for Excellence in Preventive Medicine – Dairy from Dr. Andy Johnson (left) and Dr. Steve Foulke, Merial.

Dr. Andy Johnson introduced the recipient of the 2016 AABP–Merial Award of Excellence in Preventive Veterinary Medicine - Dairy. "It is an absolute honor and pleasure for me to present this award to a very deserving veterinarian. As a past recipient of this award, I appreciate how special it is to win this award.

This person was born in Indiana. At 14 to 15 years of age he told his father he wanted to be a teacher and own some cows. His father's advice was forget being a teacher and be a veterinarian. According to his wife he is probably a much better veterinarian than a teacher anyway.

He went to Purdue where not only did he earn his DVM degree, but met his lovely and talented wife, Diane. He has been married for 38 years and has 3 talented daughters, Brooke, Bridget, and Caitlin. All are successful and well educated. In fact one of his daughters whom is a neonatal pharmacologist has helped her father better medicate sick calves, which has resulted in more success.

He started practice in Wisconsin and after 2 years moved to Hudson Michigan and developed a 7 person large animal practice along with 2 person small animal practice. He has been an innovator and was one of the early adopters of computers in their practice. He quickly saw a need to learn Spanish and self-taught himself how to communicate with his dairy farms’ employees. He is now a highly sought after trainer for dairies all over the USA. This man cares as much for the people as the cows on the dairies he works for. He puts in countless hours training, educating, and helping his dairies as well as our profession. He has always done what is right for the dairy so the dairy can be more successful and profitable. He has the best “Can Do” attitude of any person I know.

There is a dark side to this award winner. He is considered one of the best equine reproductive specialists in Michigan. I guess not everyone is perfect!

He is active in his church and has done 8 mission trips to Bolivia. He is active in 4H and his community. His wife said while his daughters were in 4H he not only cared for their animals, but all the kids’ animals.

His hobbies according to his wife Diane are golf, grandkids, golf, riding his horse Eli, golf, bicycling, golf, and mission trips. He has been my golfing partner at AABP conventions for almost 20 years and kicks my butt every year, but is the only man I have ever met that refused an 8 inch give-me putt and missed it. He still claims today it was at least 12 inches.

It is my pleasure to honor and present the AABP–Merial Award of Excellence in Preventive Veterinary Medicine - Dairy Award to my friend Greg Crosley."
Dr. John Davidson (right) is presented the 2016 AABP–Zoetis Distinguished Service Award from Dr. Glenn Rogers.

Dr. Dick Wallace, Zoetis, described the award. “This award was established in 1989. Beginning in 1996, it has been given annually by Pfizer Animal Health, Inc., now Zoetis. It consists of a commemorative plaque and a certificate of appreciation. Candidates for the award are those individuals who, through long and continued service, have promoted the goals of the American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP), and whose accomplishments have served as a model for service to bovine agriculture through organized veterinary medicine. Selection criteria include the following:

• A career of self-effacing commitment to excellence in bovine medicine as evidenced by conscientious involvement in the affairs of the AABP;
• Demonstrated leadership in keeping organized veterinary medicine abreast of the times;
• Peer recognition as an effective spokesman for the bovine practitioner.”

The recipient of the AABP Distinguished Service Award was raised in south Texas. In high school he was a four sport varsity letterman and member of a sweepstakes winning band. At Texas A&M University, he was a member of the Fightin’ Texas Aggie Band and Corps of Cadets, serving as unit commanding officer a member of the Ross Volunteer Company (Honor Guard for the Governor of the State of Texas and the state’s oldest student organization).

After completion of his DVM program in 2001 he practiced in his hometown for a year. In 2002, he purchased a mixed animal practice in Luling, Texas. After only a few months he hired an associate. Soon he opened a second location 20 miles away in Lockhart, Texas while taking on a partner and third veterinarian. The practices experienced substantial growth in 5 years of ownership. In December of 2007, he said farewell to practice and accepted a faculty position at Texas A&M University’s College of Veterinary Medicine. For the next 4 years he served as a Clinical Asst. Professor in the Food Animal Medicine and Surgery section (Field Services). During this time, he completed the Beef Cattle Production Management Series at the Great Plains Veterinary Education Center in Clay Center Nebraska. In 2011, he accepted a position in industry and has remained in an industry position since that time.

Since 2007, he has served as an official veterinarian for the Star of Texas Fair and Rodeo Austin in Austin, Texas. He is an avid outdoorsman and a lifetime member of the Boone and Crockett Club. He and his wife D’Ann have two children Claire D’Ann and Jake Travis.

Dr. John Davidson served as AABP President in 2014/2015, taking the helm at a time when he was starting a new job with Boehringer Ingelheim. He did a masterful job of leading the organization through the release of FDA bulk tank survey results, the development of drug use guidelines, transportation guidelines, and other issues too numerous to name here. Prior to his presidency, John served on the Rural Veterinary Practice and the Pharmaceutical and Biological Issues committees, and as Chair of a very active Membership committee.

This past year AABP was faced with the daunting task of identifying and hiring a new Executive Vice President, and overseeing the transition. Under John’s leadership, this almost 2 year endeavor has played out seamlessly, through the appointment of a search committee and facilitator, the coordinating of countless meetings and conference calls, and finally, guiding the Board of Directors through a very diligent and thorough process that resulted in a good decision. Unique circumstances required that Dr. Davidson, instead of the current President, lead the charge. As a result of the hiring of Dr. Fred Gingrich for Executive Vice President, John assumed the position of AABP President once again on June 30, 2016 to fill in for Dr. Gingrich until the new AABP President assumes his role today.

While this prodigious task was much more than he bargained for when he decided to run for the position of Vice President 4 years ago, he has been unfaltering in his willingness to step up, whenever and wherever needed. The service provided to AABP and our industry by Dr. John Davidson exemplifies “Distinguished Service”, and as such, more than qualifies this outstanding individual to be the recipient of the AABP Distinguished Service Award. Please help me congratulate Dr. John Davidson.”
Dr. Dale Grotelueschen receives the 2016 AABP Award of Excellence from the presenter, Dr. David Smith.

Dr. David Smith described the award. “This award was first established in 1989. Candidates for the award must be nominated from teaching, research, industry, or government areas. The nominees’ professional activities must have had a consistent and direct influence on daily activities of veterinarians in bovine practice. Eligibility also includes a degree in veterinary medicine and AABP membership.

I am proud to present the 2016 AABP Award of Excellence to this year’s honoree. I have been privileged to work with this year’s honoree for many years. He embodies the qualities that set the standards for this award. I have deep admiration for his talents and I’ve often pondered his unique ability to make things happen. His talents may best be described by the term -Servant Leadership.

Servant leaders see the big picture. They identify complex problems early and are able to implement workable solutions in a timely fashion. Servant leaders are optimists with empathy for people. They lead through service.

Our honoree has been tireless throughout his career in addressing some of the most important issues in the beef cattle industry. He is connected to the beef cattle industry like no one I know. He has a talent for recognizing important issues, pulling together teams of talented people to address the issue, finding the funding, and creating opportunities for sharing the resulting knowledge.

Among the many accomplishments of our honoree are:

- Investigating outbreaks of neonatal calf scours in a series of studies that resulted in the Sandhills Calving System;
- Developing strategic approaches AND DRIVING POLICY for the control bovine viral diarrhea virus on the ranch and in the feedlot;
- And, in many other ways, pushing forward the concepts of animal stewardship;
- Always in a spirit of collaboration.

His award nominees had this to say:

From a Nebraska rancher: To cattle producers in Nebraska, [he] is the “go to” source for veterinary advice on cattle health. This is due to his credibility and his ability to communicate with farmers and ranchers both the underlying science and the practical steps to prevent livestock disease.

From a Kansas rancher: I am so grateful to have great educators like [him] give of their time and talents to help make the beef family even stronger.

A veterinary practitioner: He is never too busy to lend a sympathetic and professional ear to one who is facing a difficult situation.

A colleague in industry: He epitomizes the hard working compassionate servant leader worthy of this honor.

A colleague in academia: Whether it is coming up with creative ways to educate students or trying to figure out how to eradicate BVDV from the USA, his ideas are big and passionate.

Our honoree grew up on a farm near Schuyler, Nebraska. He received his DVM from the University of Missouri and, surprising to many, he began his professional career as a dairy practitioner in Wisconsin. He then worked in beef cattle practice for many years in Curtis, NE.

In 1985 he joined the faculty of the University of Nebraska to do extension and diagnostic services. He was later, Senior then Managing Veterinarian at Pfizer Animal Health/Zoetis. He now serves as the Director of the Great Plains Veterinary Education Center in Clay Center, NE.

His devotion to veterinary medicine and the cattle industry is evident through his active involvement and leadership in AABP, the AVC, NCBA, and other national, state, and local organizations. He has received wide acclaim for his work including recently being named one of the 20 most influential veterinarians in America by Bovine Veterinarian Magazine.

I am proud to call our honoree a mentor, a colleague, and very good friend - the recipient of the 2016 AABP Award of Excellence, Dr. Dale Grotelueschen.”
Dr. Sarel van Amstel (center) receives the AABP–Merck Animal Health Mentor of the Year Award from Dr. Rick Sibbell (left) and Dr. David Anderson.

Dr. Rick Sibbell, Merck Animal Health, described the award. “The AABP–Merck Mentor of the Year Award is presented annually to an AABP member who has been engaged in the field of veterinary medicine for at least 25 years and has served as both advisor and role model to pre-veterinary and/or veterinary students. This award was instituted in 2007 and is conferred annually to a member that embodies this spirit whether in practice, the clinic, or the classroom. The recipient is presented with a commemorative plaque at the annual business luncheon.”

The 2016 award winner was introduced by Dr. David Anderson. “I am so proud to be able to announce that Dr. Sarel van Amstel, a Professor in the Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences at the University of Tennessee, is the 2016 recipient of the 2016 Merck Animal Health Mentor-of-the-Year award. Dr. van Amstel has been a stalwart for bovine medicine for more than 40 years, especially as it relates to lameness and soundness. He is widely recognized as a pre-eminent teacher, clinician, and researcher. Dr. van Amstel came to the University of Tennessee as an Associate Professor in 1996 and was promoted to the rank of Professor in 2005. During that time, Dr. van Amstel has never wavered in his dedication to the advancement of teaching, service, and research in bovine medicine.

Dr. van Amstel is nationally and internationally recognized as an expert in lameness of cattle. He, with Dr. Jan Shearer, established the Master Hoof Care certification program. This program was an inter-institutional collaboration with the University of Tennessee and the University of Florida. Thousands of dairy farmers, hoof trimmers, and veterinarians have benefitted from the expertise and applicability of this program to improve the wellbeing, soundness, and sustainability of dairy and beef cattle. This collaboration resulted in the production of several textbooks and training manuals for hoof care, foot trimming, disease identification and management, and lameness prevention programs for dairy cows. These efforts were recognized by the USDA Group Honor Award for Excellence for outstanding innovation in animal health by initiating the Master Hoof Care Technician Program, the Nation’s first foot care training program for dairy employees.

Dr. van Amstel has been repeatedly recognized for teaching excellence. He is highly respected and admired by the students for the tireless hours he dedicates to their training, the many opportunities he provides for their professional advancement, and the personal interest he takes in their health. He has been recognized with teaching awards including the Lindsay Young Teaching Award (1999), Large Animal Clinician of the Year Award (1999, 2001, 2002, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014), Award of Merit from the Gamma Sigma Delta Honor Society of Agriculture as member of the UT Cloning Team (2005), Wharton Teaching Award (2009), UTIA Service Award 2013, and the Sandra Powell Food Animal Teaching Excellence Award (2013).

Dr. van Amstel’s research has focused on foot and leg soundness in cattle. He is regarded both nationally and internationally as an expert in lameness research. He has served on editorial boards and as scientific content reviewer for more than 10 journals including journals in Australia, New Zealand, Iran, and South Africa. He has published over 100 abstracts and proceedings and 56 peer reviewed scientific articles. In addition to this, he has published 15 book chapters and 170 lay papers. These publications serve to enhance the reputation and visibility of bovine veterinary medicine throughout the world. Despite nearing retirement, Dr. van Amstel has continued to publish peer-reviewed manuscripts, write new texts, and form new collaborations with faculty.

I am honored to have worked with Dr. van Amstel and call him a friend and colleague. He is a model faculty member. He is patient, collegial, progressive minded, and maintains a balance between teaching, research, and service that is unparalleled. He fosters development of junior faculty, mentors interns, residents, and graduate students. He is approachable to professional and undergraduate students equally. I cannot overemphasize the role he plays in our faculty community. I am so grateful to Merck for allowing me to recognize Dr. van Amstel’s accomplishments through recognition as the 2016 AABP-Merck Animal Health Mentor-of-the-Year.
Dr. Gatz Riddell (left) receives the Amstutz-Williams Award from Dr. David McClary.

"This wood carving of a bull I place before you today represents recognition by AABP that has rarely been bestowed. It is the Amstutz-Williams Award, named in honor of two of our founding fathers, our first executive officer Dr. Harold Amstutz and long-time editor of AABP publications, Dr. Eric Williams. Many of you in this audience have likely never seen this award presented or recognize its significance. Since its inception in 1986 it has only been presented 10 times with the last being in 2008. The list of recipients is the Mount Rushmore of our organization and they include in addition to the original recipients and name sakes, Drs. Amstutz and Williams, Drs. Leland Allenstein, Elmer Woelffer, Ben Harrington, Otto Radostits, Donald Williams, James E. Jarrett (our second Executive VP), John Noordsy and the most recent recipient, Dr. Sam Hutchins, our long time exhibits coordinator.

The identity of the 2016 recipient is already no secret and for three reasons this introduction will be rather short:

No. 1 - I know how much the recipient detests long-winded introductions;

No. 2 - He has been looking at his watch for the last 30 min. thinking "Are we ever going to get out of here so we can keep afternoon sessions on time?";

And No. 3 - I well know the biological demands that build with the sitting in those seats for two hours.

The recipient of this award is so modest that the last thing he wants is for me or anyone to be standing up here giving him any type of recognition, and without looking him in the eyes right now I know his face is reddening and the vessels in his neck are bulging.

He is a native of McPherson, KS and a 1977 graduate of the Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine. He was a long-term faculty member of the CVM at Auburn University where I had the distinct pleasure of working side by side with him. During that time I got to know him as a colleague and best friend.

In 1993, while in his second term on the Board, he came by my room at this conference and asked my advice if he should run for vice-president of our organization. I told him he should, and that may have turned out to be out to be the best piece of advice I have ever given. He was elected vice-president and ultimately become our 32nd president in 1995-96. During his term his leadership capabilities became very apparent.

Our recipient took over the executive reins of our organization in 2004 under some difficult circumstances with the failing health and ultimate retirement of our
previous Exec VP, Dr. Jim Jarrett. In the months prior to taking over, he made numerous trips from his home to Rome, GA to facilitate the transition of the office.

Yes, our recipient is Dr. Gatz Riddell. I don’t have to tell you about his accomplishments with AABP, but what many of you might not recognize is the level of recognition and respect he has outside AABP. For instance in 1999 he was awarded the AABP Award of Excellence. I realize this award is given annually, and not to take anything away from past, present, or future recipients, the uniqueness is the fact he was nominated and presented the award by Dr. Steve Sundlof, who at the time was Director of the FDA’s Center for Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Sundlof made this nomination in recognition of Gatz’s excellent guidance to CVM through his position on AVMA’s Council on Biologics and Therapeutic Agents. His continuing contributions to AVMA include serving on and chairing the Allied Organizations Committee. He is highly regarded within AVMA even though he never lets diplomacy get in the way of doing what is right and what is best for our organization and members.

Discovering that had a few unoccupied waking hours he ran for and was elected to the Board of Directors for the North American Veterinary Conference, whose annual meetings in Orlando represent the largest veterinary meeting in the world. He ultimately was elected and served as president of NAVC in 2012-13, making major contributions to structure and management of that organization.

None of us, regardless of how close we feel we are to this individual, can really appreciate the impact Gatz has throughout organized veterinary medicine. A member of the American Association of Swine Veterinarians told me last week how much Gatz’s interaction with their executive officer, Dr. Tom Burkgren, had meant to their organization.

If I could describe Gatz in a few words they would be: he is the epitome of professionalism, the icon of dedication, the redefine of tenacity, and the master of attention to detail. His work ethic is unprecedented as any of us who have worked with him and attempted to keep up with him can attest. His demand for excellence was exemplified by members of his Auburn bovine rectal palpation team members who knew finishing second was not an option. His teams put together an impressive string of victories in SCAVMA competition which was broken only by Delta Airlines when a delayed flight prevented his team from making it to the meeting in time for the competition. That legacy continues at Auburn today.

If I were to start to list all of Gatz accomplishments we would be here much longer than any of you would want to endure. We could form a long line of individuals including AABP present and former Board members and officers, professional colleagues, and former students who would all have unique stories of how this man has touched their lives, but obviously we cannot do that.

I would certainly be remiss if I did not also mention and credit the ever-present support from his wife, Dr. Kay Riddell. She is the only person who truly knows the dedication of this man.

Kay, I would like to have you and Molly join me on the stage to help me make this presentation.

He was my best man in my wedding 26 years ago, and has been AABP’s best man for the last dozen years, the 11th recipient of the Amstutz-Williams Award, Dr. M. Gatz Riddell Jr.”