

By Tina Kitt

The Wauneta Breeze

You will soon be able to add the National Golden Spur Award to the long list of honors and accolades earned by Wauneta's Jack Maddux.

Later this month Maddux will become the 32nd honoree to receive this prestigious award, annually given in recognition of the lifetime achievements of the nation's top ranchers.

Maddux will be the first Nebraskan to be presented with this award which was inaugurated in 1978.

A third-generation rancher and manager of Maddux Cattle Company, he will be presented the award in Lubbock, Texas, on Oct. 17. Maddux was nominated for the award by the National Cattlemen's Foundation.

"Jack is most deserving of this recognition, as he continues to provide leadership and a common sense approach to the ranching and livestock industries," said Terry Stokes of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. "He works to do what is best for the industry and the people who mean so much to him."

Raised on a ranch north of Wauneta, Maddux graduated from Wauneta High School in 1949 and went on to earn a bachelor of science degree from Colorado State University in 1953 before serving a tour of duty in the U.S. Air Force. He and his wife, Carol, have three grown children and eight grandchildren.

Maddux has served the beef industry at the state and national levels as well as worked locally to improve the family ranch and feeding operation, which was homesteaded in 1886.

In 2006, Maddux was one of six individuals honored as distinguished Nebraskans during the 25th Annual NEBRASKAland Foundation Statehood Day dinner. Gov. Dave Heineman presented Maddux with the 2006 Pioneer Award for his service to agriculture and leadership across the state.

Ranching roots

The Maddux family got its start in southwest Nebraska when Jack's grandfather, Taylor Maddux, moved to Nebraska and ran a livery stable at McCook. In 1886, his wife, Clara, took up a claim north of Wauneta along the Stinking Water Creek.

By the early 1900s, Taylor had accumulated enough land to get a toehold in the ranching business. He sold the livery stable and a herd of Angus cows and moved back to the ranch.

Taylor Maddux died in 1917, at which time Jack's father, Glen, and uncle, Wilfred, took over the ranch, expanding the operation through World War II. In his heyday, Jack said his father fed 1,000 head of cattle.

"Back then, everything was done by hand with a team of mules and a No. 14 scoop," said Maddux.

Today, the Maddux Cattle Company includes a 3,000 head feedyard and 2,500 head cow-calf operation encompassing mostly deeded land and some leased acres across western Nebraska.

The Maddux Cattle Company breeding program uses a composite of Red Angus, Red Poll, Tarentaise and South Devon breeds. The calves are finished in the Maddux feedlot along with purchased background calves.

The feedlot operation revolves around the longstanding practice of early weaning utilized by Jack and his son, John Maddux, of Imperial. They say for them it is cheaper to feed their calves on low cost corn and byproducts in a feedlot setting than carry them on grass to the yearling

stage.

The Maddux operation was one of the first to adopt a multi-cell, rest-rotation grazing management system, cross fencing and no-till corn production.

Actively involved with the National Cattleman's Beef Association, Jack Maddux has traveled extensively in the interest of bringing better management and financial planning to the industry.

He was the first honoree to be named Cattle Businessman of the Year by the Association in 1984 and served as the first treasurer of NCBA. He is a trustee of the National Cattlemen's Foundation.

Maddux has held leadership roles with the Nebraska Stock Growers Association and the Society for Range Management. He is listed in the Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement and received the Nebraska Ag Builder Award.

He is a past chairman of the board of the University of Nebraska Foundation, and he was named Cattleman of the Year in 2002 by Nebraska Cattlemen's Association.

In 2004, he was recognized as Livestock Leader of the Year by Colorado State University.

Both Jack and Carol Maddux were honored for excellence in the management of Nebraska rangeland by the Nebraska Society for Range Management.

Additionally, Maddux has been active in water and natural resource policy issues. He served on the Legislative Water Advisory Committee and was involved in the formulation of Nebraska's groundwater management legislation. He is a former member of the Platte River Whooping Crane Trust and serves on the Water Policy Task Force.

The National Golden Spur Award is a joint recognition by some of the industry's leading organizations, among them the American Quarter Horse Association, National Cattlemen's Foundation, Ranching Heritage Association, Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, Texas Cattle Feeders Association and Texas Farm Bureau.

Host organization, the Ranching Heritage Association, is a support arm of the National Ranching Heritage Center museum and historical park established to preserve the history of ranching, pioneer life and the development of the livestock industry in North America.

The Madduxes plan to travel to Texas next week, where they will be joined by family and friends from across the country for the award presentation in Lubbock.