



Dustin Ladenburger of Stratton was honored Monday as Nebraska Farm Bureau's 2009 Young Farmers and Ranchers Achievement Award winner at the Nebraska Farm Bureau convention in Kearney.

Farm Bureau members 18 to 35 years of age apply for the award. Ladenburger was selected on the basis of performance in farm or ranch management, setting and achieving goals, overcoming obstacles and service to the community and Farm Bureau.

The award winner is a brother of Lori Mendenhall of Imperial.

Dustin Ladenburger is the fourth generation to farm near Stratton in Hitchcock County. He raises 95 Angus cow/calf pairs, owns 800 acres and rents 1,000, which is split between farm ground and pasture.

On his farm ground, he raises dryland wheat and corn. Ladenburger has two degrees from Chadron State College, one in range management and the other in Elementary Education.

Ladenburger has a passion for agriculture and education and works as a substitute teacher to teach a new generation about the importance of agriculture in their lives.

Ladenburger works with his father Dan and brother Nick on the farm. He trades labor for cattle feed while his cows are calving. This arrangement is a benefit for Ladenburger, who gets feeds for his cattle, and his father who receives year-round help.

While Ladenburger has his own operation, he is also the primary caretaker of the family's cattle and pastures. He helps buy the equipment to make the farm more efficient.

Ladenburger wants to protect the land and provide the best for his herd. He plants wind breaks to offer cattle and wildlife protection from the wind, cross-fences all of his pastures for rotational grazing and installed a water line and tank to provide water to his herd.

Ladenburger focuses on improving the quality of his cows and he looks for specific traits in his bulls and heifers. His main goal is to provide the best food for the growing population.

Ladenburger is a member of Hitchcock County Farm Bureau. He is the Young Farmers and Ranchers chairman and has served as a voting delegate to the Nebraska Farm Bureau convention.

He currently serves as the District 7 representative on the State Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee. Ladenburger has participated in the Nebraska Farm Bureau Leadership Academy and received a McCloy Fellowship in Agriculture.

He attends St Joseph's Catholic Church in Stratton.

As winner of the Young Farmers and Ranchers Achievement Award, Ladenburger received a \$500 cash prize, a flip video camera and an all-expense paid trip to the 2010 American Farm Bureau convention in Seattle, Wash., in January, where he will compete in the national contest.