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NEWS RELEASE

Saskatchewan steer earns top honours at UFA Steer Classic

CALGARY – Satoru Kogo is already considering the fine dining possibilities.

“Great colour. Marbling looks fine. Definitely, I’m excited,” said the executive chef of the Chicago Chophouse on late Saturday afternoon, standing under the Big Top at the Calgary Stampede. “Most likely I’ll be using the whole cow. Primary cuts, for sure. It’ll make great stocks and consommés, and definitely great steaks and roasts.”

In a decade-long tradition at the Calgary Stampede, the grand champion of the annual UFA Steer Classic – in this case, an impressive Charolais that had already won best of breed earlier in the afternoon – has been purchased by the Chicago Chophouse. The winning steer, owned by Roger Hardy’s Sooline Cattle Co. of Midale, Sask., will be the feature item on the menu some time in September, when the downtown Calgary restaurant holds its annual Champion Steer Dinner, a \$150-a-plate gala fundraiser. This year, the beneficiary will be the University of Calgary’s Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.

The grand champion steer from Saskatchewan was tops among 79 entries from five Canadian provinces – and earned \$9,000 in prize money to go with the \$1,000 it won as best in the Charolais class.

The UFA Steer Classic’s reserve champion, or runner-up, went to a 1,362-pound Angus cross owned by Fairland Cattle Co. of Penhold, Alta., good for a \$4,000 cheque plus another \$1,000 for being tops in the Open class. The steer has been purchased by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Landmen, and will remain on display in the Agriculture Barns for the remainder of 2010 Stampede.

The overall champion had won a regional show in Weyburn, Sask., from a field of 140 entries earlier this year.

“You can obviously tell that this steer carries a lot of red meat, and I think that’s what (judge Cam Sparrow of Vanscoy, Sask.) is looking for,” said Hardy. “Cam wants the kind of steers that will grade, and he’s got the potential to be graded really well, we think.”

“This is great. This is the top steer show in Canada,” added Hardy. “This is the place to win the steer show. We didn’t have an idea (that they had a potential winner), but we thought we had a chance. I guess every time you come to a show, you think you have a chance.”

The UFA Steer Classic, which began back in 1983, represents the culmination of the regional steer show season. The UFA Steer Classic, the richest steer show in Canada, sees members of the beef industry congregate at the Stampede to promote and compete in everything from the merits of purebred genetics to the current trends in consumer beef demands.



"It's a good chance for Calgary's city folks to get exposure to the steer industry," said David Pyke, who chairs the Stampede's Steer Classic committee. "One of our mandates in the past few years has been to enhance the education process for those who are not directly involved in the industry."

As usual, the Stampede was offering an extra \$5,000 in added prize money if the UFA Steer Classic grand champion had also won the Lloydminster Steer Show – which would have made for a potential windfall of \$20,000.

No such luck, although the UFA Steer Show's reserve champ took the same honours up in Lloydminster. The beast owned by Dusty and Sara Howell had an extremely rewarding show season, also ending up reserve champ at the Carstairs 4-H show and Drayton Valley. "Four reserve championships? We'll take that any day," said Dusty Howell. "We picked him up in the middle of May from a good customer of mine that did a good job feeding him, Tim Chalack (brother of Dr. David Chalack, the Calgary Stampede's volunteer president and chairman of the board). We thought we had a pretty fair shot at winning here."

The UFA Steer Classic's list of grand and reserve breed champions, respectively, is as follows: Albert Boutin of Alida, Sask., and Aaron Miller of Cremona, Alta., in Angus; Wyatt Hiller of Edmonton and Silvercreek Simmentals of Rosemary, Alta., in Junior; Colton Symens of Mission, B.C., and Austin Nixdorff of Airdrie, Alta., in Limousin; Bryson Jones of Balzac, Alta., and Grant Hirsche of High River, Alta., in Shorthorn; Rob and Stephani French of Stayner, Ont., and Fairland Cattle Co. of Penhold in Simmental; Barry Ducherer of Neilburg, Sask., and Gary Kiziak of Ardrossan, Alta., in Speckle Park; and Shannon Eaton of Streamstown, Alta., and the French family in Zilmax Market Heifer. Barry Fraser of Ardrossan, Alta., took grand and reserve champion honours in Murray Grey. Lamport's Herefords of Balzac, Alta., was grand champion in Hereford. Rod McLeod of Balzac, Alta., was reserve champ in Charolais, while Shelby Kent of Carstairs, Alta., took the same honours in Open.

Sparrow, the UFA Steer Classic's judge for the second straight year, made no secrets about what he was looking for. "Muscle in the cattle. That's what we eat," he said. "And I saw an exceptional set of steers today. I looked at a lot of great steers."

The majority of the entries in the UFA Steer Classic will be entered in the Stampede's Quality Beef Competition on Monday, July 19, at Cargill Foods in High River, Alta., which pays \$3,000 plus the value of the carcass to the grand champion.

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The Calgary Stampede is a volunteer-supported, not-for-profit community organization that preserves and promotes western heritage and values. The Stampede contributes to the quality of life in Calgary and southern Alberta through its world-renowned 10-day Stampede, year-round facilities, western events and several youth and agriculture programs. All revenue is reinvested into Calgary Stampede programs and facilities. For more about the Stampede, visit www.calgarystampede.com.

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