

2009
Woman of the Year
in Agriculture



Marcia Lightsey

Florida
CattleWomen, Inc.



Dear Friends of Agriculture:

The “Woman of the Year in Agriculture” award ceremony is always a much-anticipated event, adding to the excitement of opening-day festivities at the Florida State Fair. Since 1985 the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has proudly sponsored this prestigious award in conjunction with the Florida State Fair Authority.

Coming from a fifth-generation agricultural family, I know first-hand the vital role that women have always played in farming and ranching. Since beginning my tenure as Commissioner of Agriculture in 2001, I have had the great pleasure of presenting the “Woman of the Year in Agriculture” award to nine

very worthy recipients. This is my last Florida State Fair as Commissioner and the last time I will have the honor of presenting this award.

This year’s recipient, Marcia Lightsey of Lake Wales, is a tireless advocate for agriculture and has long been active in beef promotion and agriculture education. In addition, the Lightsey family has been honored with numerous awards for conservation efforts.

By receiving this award, Marcia joins 25 other women who have earned the respect and admiration of their peers by making outstanding contributions to Florida agriculture. This booklet summarizes her many accomplishments.

Again, it is my pleasure to congratulate Marcia Lightsey on being named “Woman of the Year in Agriculture” for 2009.

Sincerely,

Charles H. Bronson
Commissioner of Agriculture





Lightsey Family Photos

Marcia Lightsey

Marcia Lightsey was born in 1954 in San Antonio, Texas, to Ralph and Hattie Hubbard. The family settled in Brandon, Florida, in 1962. Marcia's father was in the Air Force, but the family always lived off base, out in the country, so that Marcia and her brother and sister could have animals. Marcia graduated from Brandon High School in 1972, and in 1973 she married her high school sweetheart, Cary Lightsey, a sixth-generation Florida cattle rancher. Marcia and Cary moved to one of the Lightsey family ranches, east of Lake Wales, where she learned to ride, rope, build fences, plant grass, and sort, brand, and vaccinate cattle. Marcia, Cary, and Cary's brother, Layne, worked side by side to build their herd and expand their land holdings. Today the family runs over 6,000 head of cattle on over 32,000 acres in three Florida counties.





The Lightseys have been honored with countless awards for their conservation efforts. They practice rotational grazing (resting pastures between seasons to protect them from overgrazing and erosion), water recycling, and controlled burning (to enhance wildlife habitat and regenerate native vegetation). The Lightseys preserve 40 percent of their land in its native state to provide wildlife corridors and protect soil and water quality, and they have placed over 80 percent of their property in conservation easements to protect it from future development.



Marcia enjoys coordinating eco-tours of the family's ranches and has hosted groups from the Audubon Society and local schools.

The ranches are home to many rare and endangered species, including scrub jays, gopher tortoises, black bears, and bald eagles.

Visitors are always delighted by the wildlife they encounter. They also enjoy the 300-year-old live oaks, beautiful views, and open spaces – and Marcia is happy for the opportunity to educate city people about the ecological benefits of agriculture.

Marcia Lightsey is one of Florida agriculture's great ambassadors. She is in love with the cattle-ranching lifestyle, which she calls "healthy" and "exciting." She is passionate about living close to the land and working with her family in a family-run business, and she inspires enthusiasm in just about everyone she meets.



Lightsey Family Photos

She is a tireless advocate for agriculture and has long been active in beef promotion and agriculture education. A member of Polk County CattleWomen, Inc., since 1993, she has held every position on the board several times over and is currently treasurer and state director.

As promotion chairman for Florida CattleWomen, Inc., she organized a traveling team of CattleWomen to promote beef in Publix supermarkets around the state. She managed 20 in-store demonstrations in non-cattle-producing areas. She worked closely with store meat managers and provided recipes, promotional handouts, nutritional information, and evaluation sheets for each demonstration. She also conducted store surveys for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and worked to place new cooking labels on beef packaging in local grocery stores.

In 2001 Marcia became the Florida CattleWomen's education chairman. In this position she distributed beef teaching kits and nutritional pamphlets at over a dozen conferences and conventions around the state. She also

Lightsey Family Photos





organized the CattleWomen's annual beef short course, which included a field trip to the Lightseys' 3,000-acre ranch in Lake Kissimmee, pristine Brama Island, a haven for 28 endangered species.

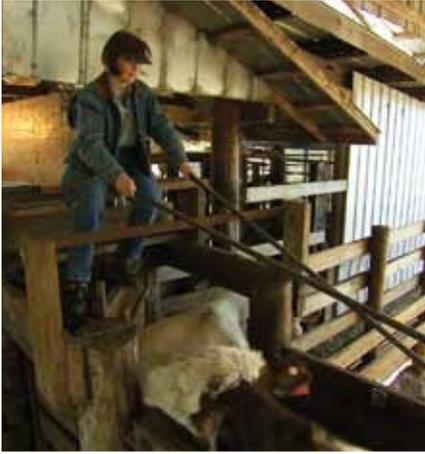
In 2002 Marcia became president of Florida CattleWomen, Inc. That year, the organization began participating in the popular Southern Women's Show in Orlando and Jacksonville, conducting cooking demonstrations and passing out tens of thousands of beef samples. During Marcia's presidency the Florida CattleWomen also hosted the National Beef Ambassador Contest, a competitive public-speaking program for young people. The contest helps students develop leadership skills while spotlighting the positive impact the cattle industry has on the economy and families.

In 2004 Marcia was asked by the president of the Florida Cattlemen's Association (FCA) to co-chair his public relations committee. She helped develop a new web site for both FCA and Florida CattleWomen, Inc., and

helped create an FCA calendar featuring beautiful photographs of Florida cattle ranches. She worked with well-known photographer Carlton Ward on the photos for the calendar, whose purpose is to educate Floridians about the importance of preserving our working ranchlands. The calendar has proven very popular and is now in its fifth year of production.

When Marcia's children were young, she was active with the Lazy A's 4-H Club of Lake Wales. For 14 years she served as a project leader working with members who wanted to show beef and market steer animals. She coordinated workshops on grooming, hoof trimming, showmanship, marketing, and recordkeeping. In 1988 she was named 4-H Club Volunteer of the Year.

Marcia's service in the agriculture community has brought her many awards and honors. In 1988, after years of working closely with their local FFA chapter, Marcia and Cary



were presented with an Honorary Chapter Degree. In 2003 Marcia was chosen as the Florida CattleWomen's Outstanding Cattlewoman of the Year. In 2005 the Lightsey family won the National Cattlemen's Beef Association Environmental Stewardship Award and the Florida Commissioner of Agriculture's Agricultural-Environmental Leadership Award. That same year Marcia received the Florida Agri-Women's Founder's Award.

Her list of accomplishments just keeps growing. In 2008 Marcia became Region II Director for the American National CattleWomen (ANCW), based in Denver. In this position she oversees membership coordination, beef promotion, and beef education for seven southeastern states. She has conducted two Region II meetings, one in Georgia in 2008 and one in Louisiana in 2009. She has been successful in all the tasks she has undertaken for the group, and this summer in Denver she was named ANCW Promoter of the Year.

Marcia and Cary Lightsey live near Lake Wales. They have three children and seven grandchildren, and the entire family works together to continue to grow the Lightsey Cattle Company.





Previous Winners

- 2008 Patsy Nathe of Pasco County
- 2007 Colleen H. Boggs of Homestead
- 2006 Iris Pollock Wall of Indiantown
- 2005 Marlene Strickland of Sarasota
- 2004 Martina "Teena" Borek of Homestead
- 2003 Jennie Lee Zipperer of Fort Myers
- 2002 Annette Barnett Land of Branford
- 2001 Barbara Carlton of Sidell
- 2000 Helen Houck of Perry
- 1999 Vina Jean Banks of Balm
- 1998 Nancy Gurnett Hardy of Winter Haven
- 1997 Gertrude "Trudy" Carey of Hillsborough County
- 1996 Norma Stokes of Highlands County
- 1995 Louve "Vee" Frierson Platt of Clewiston,
and Patricia Robbins of Miami
- 1994 Anne Wardlaw Dickinson of Frostproof
- 1993 Sarah W. Bailey of St. Johns County
- 1992 Carol C. Murphy of Volusia County
- 1991 Ruth M. Tucker of Brevard County
- 1990 Jeanette Barthle of Pasco County
- 1989 Belle Jeffords of Alachua County
- 1988 Carolyn Reed Kempfer of Osceola County
- 1987 Dorothy Conner Shipes of Lake County
- 1986 Ruth Wedgworth of Belle Glade
- 1985 Jo Ann Smith of Marion County



**Florida Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services**

CHARLES H. BRONSON, Commissioner