**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR KEVIN YON, AN ANGUS BREEDER IN SALUDA COUNTY, AND TO APPLAUD HIS SELECTION AS THE 2018 SOUTHEASTERN FARMER OF THE YEAR BY THE SWISHER SWEETS/SUNBELT EXPO.

Whereas, Kevin Yon, a son and grandson of sharecroppers, was twelve when his parents loaned him the money to buy his first steer and heifer, and by high school, he had purchased a small crossbred herd he kept in a leased pasture in Anderson County, close enough to care for when he left to pursue a bachelor’s degree in animal science from Clemson University where he met his wife, Lydia; and

Whereas, after graduation from Clemson, he worked for seven years managing the beef herd at Congaree Farms near Columbia and was able to start their own herd by buying half of the Congaree Farms Angus herd, taking a reduced salary to earn equity in twenty of the one hundred head he bought; and

Whereas, they were able to obtain financing from the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers loan program of the USDA‑Farm Service Agency at a difficult time for obtaining commercial loans; and

Whereas, one of the Yons’ big breaks came when one of their bull customers offered to sell them a hundred acres and a small house, then leased them additional land, and traded use of equipment for their labor in managing his cattle. Phil Perry, the area agent for the Clemson Extension, recruited the Yons to move to Ridge Spring where they improved and expanded their Angus herd; and

Whereas, the first Clemson alumnus to harvest the Swisher Sweets/Sunbelt Expo’s top prize and only the third South Carolinian to win in the twenty‑nine‑year history. Mr. Yon, along with his wife, Lydia, and all three of their children, are graduates of Clemson’s College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences; and

Whereas, besides Mr. and Mrs. Yon, all three children, as well as two of their spouses, also Clemson graduates, have returned to work in some aspect of the farm which has ten permanent employees; and

Whereas, Mr. Yon’s herd, one of the best Angus seedstock herds in the nation, includes about 1,200 registered and 590 commercial breeding‑age females and 90 steers and heifers that are fed out. The family sells some 375 bulls and 150 females in two on‑farm sales annually, as well as cattle in private treaty sales; and

Whereas, the farm covers 4,258 acres; 642 acres are used for Bermuda grass, yielding six tons per acre, and 695 acres for planting small grains, yielding four tons of round‑bale silage per acre. In 2016, he began growing pecans, and now the family owns a retail store in Ridge Spring where they sell their pecan products, beef, and other South Carolina‑grown products; and

Whereas, his award from Swisher Sweets/Sunbelt Expo includes a $15,000 cash award plus $2,500 as a state winner, the use of a Massey Ferguson tractor for a year, a $500 gift certificate from the Southern States cooperative, a Columbia jacket, a smoker‑grill, and a Henry Golden Boy “American Farmer” Tribute Edition rifle; and

Whereas, feeling that they are living their dream, the Yons embrace the obligation to repay a debt to the farming community and to aspiring farmers by hosting high school student workers and college student interns on their farm to help others realize their dreams; and

Whereas, his extensive service to the farming community includes service on the 25,000‑member American Angus Association as president and former treasurer and vice president; leading the National Beef Cattle Evaluation Consortium to help universities to conduct beef‑cattle evaluations; and service as president of South Carolina’s Cattlemen’s Association and Angus Association, president of Saluda County Cattlemen’s Association, vice chairman of the Saluda Soil & Water Conservation District; and

Whereas, in 2009, the Yon Family Farm was honored with the National Environmental Stewardship Award from the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association; and

Whereas, the House of Representatives deeply values the honesty, integrity, and hard work that Kevin Yon and his family have shown throughout their remarkable career as Angus breeders, and the members celebrate his selection as the 2018 Swisher Sweets/Sunbelt Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year with them. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize and honor Kevin Yon, an Angus breeder in Saluda County, and applaud his selection as the 2018 Southeastern Farmer of the Year by the Swisher Sweets/Sunbelt Expo.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Kevin Yon.

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