

NSIF 1980 Commercial Producer of the Year Award  
John Beckett, Gillespie, Illinois  
Presented by David Meisinger, NPPC

I am honored to announce the winner of the Commercial Producer of the Year Award to John Beckett, Gillespie, Illinois.

John Beckett was raised on a corn hog farm in Macon County, Illinois. He has a B.S. degree in Animal Science and Agriculture Journalism in Iowa State University. He was a member of the meat judging team, President of Farm House fraternity and Editor of Iowa Agriculturalist.

After graduating he worked for United Duroc Swine Registry Association for 13 years. Mr. Beckett originated and supervised the Duroc Production Registry and Production Accredited Herd Programs. He bred and raised the first officially approved meat type hog in Iowa. John also bred and raised Red Charm, 1955 champion of Iowa's Spring Sale and later became foundation sire for one of the original meat type bloodlines of the Duroc breed. He started showing market barrows in 1954 and has exhibited barrows nearly every year since, including top winners in both carcass and on foot competition.

In 1961 John changed to commercial production. He annually produced about 6,000 head. Since then he has marketed hogs grade and yield and uses sonoray and probe for selection of replacement gilts. His herd boars are mostly from test stations or from herds with on-farm testing programs. All of John's hogs are raised in confinement. His two newest finishing buildings are partial slots and modified open front type which include a small outside area for each pen. Sows and gilts are housed in similar modified open front buildings and are hand mated in a new environmentally controlled building.

John participated in four American Pork Congresses Seminar programs and received 3 Illinois Superior Pork Producer Awards. John is now serving his 16th year as Secretary of the Annual Illinois Spring Barrow Show. He participated in the historic May 1966 National Nickels for Profit Rally at Moline, Illinois to kick off a market check off program. He received the National Hog Farmer Pork Industry Service Award and also received the Illinois Master Farmer Award. In 1978 John was elected President of National Swine Improvement Federation.

As an Illinois farm boy myself, I take great pride in congratulating Mr. John Beckett as Commercial Producer of the Year.