

Media Release

Young Achiever Award Honours Jack Laurie

A young cattle genetics leader, already making a global impact, has been named the 2026 National Herd Improvement Association of Australia (NHIA) Young Achiever Award recipient.

Winner, Jack Laurie from Breeder Genetics, Moppy near Gloucester, NSW was recognised for his outstanding contribution to the cattle industry as part of a presentation at the 2026 Angus Youth Round Up in Tamworth.

The NHIA Young Achiever Award rewards individuals shaping the future of the industry through action, integrity and leadership.

Nominated by Debbie Mills of Holbrook Breeders Australia, Jack's sharp ability to identify opportunity, build clear business plans, navigate complex logistics and deliver with confidence and momentum has been impressive.

"What sets Jack apart is the respect he has earned from established cattlemen in Australia and internationally," Ms Mills said.

"He is widely known for operating with knowledge and integrity, returning royalties back to breeders - largely retained within Australia - and for his strong commitment to mentoring and supporting junior programs. Just as comfortable working with producers as he is engaging with industry leaders and young people, Jack brings credibility and purpose to every interaction."

One of Jack's most significant leadership achievements was delivering a complex bovine genetics project to Norfolk Island, in collaboration with Regional Development Australia Mid North Coast. Jack successfully tendered for the project, supplying semen and embryos across multiple breeds while meeting strict performance, health and biosecurity requirements.

Delivered on time and on budget, the project achieved strong conception and calving results through detailed planning from the outset, addressing long-standing protein deficiency caused by inbreeding and supporting a more sustainable cattle industry for Norfolk Island residents.

Born and bred into the cattle industry, and a graduate of junior programs through Angus Australia, Jack's skills have progressed and enabled him to deliver industry impact in a remarkably short time, a testament to his attitude.

"Jack is also highly regarded for his honest, down-to-earth approach. He doesn't see problems, only opportunities to be solved," Ms Mills said.

Our Values



Trusted Collaboration

Creating strong connections across industry and government to drive collective progress and shared success for members.



Championing Industry

Champion herd improvement through innovation, expertise, and industry leadership.



Elevating Standards

Set and uphold professional benchmarks that lift quality, ensure integrity, and secure the future of the sector.



Empowering Members

Supporting members by delivering vital on-farm services – equipping them to engage, succeed, and innovate.

“This mindset has earned him access to breeding programs around the world, allowing firsthand assessment of genetics and a clear-eyed view of how bloodlines will perform under Australian conditions. His focus on family lines, not just individual sires, underpins long-term, consistent breeding outcomes for producers.”

NHIA CEO Sara Merckel presented the award.

“It’s inspiring to see the high calibre of people coming through our industry, Jack is a leading example of following your dreams and giving back to community,” she said.

“Jack represents the future of our industry in the very best way, someone working for benefits across the entire sector.”

Ms Merckel also told the Angus Youth Round Up that NHIA has been operating for 30 years and works with cattle, sheep and goats.

“Historically it has been more dairy focused, but beef is also a big part of our membership and growing by the day - it is time for closer collaboration between dairy and beef,” she said.

“The two sectors are highly complementary, there’s enormous opportunity to work more closely by sharing services, breeding information, technicians and resources. We can do this while building clear and attractive career pathways for young people across both industries.”

NHIA supports dairy and beef alignment through its nationally recognised semen and embryo handling accreditation, underpinning professionalism, biosecurity and best practice.



Photo caption:

Angus Australia Director Erica Halliday, 2026 National Herd Improvement Association of Australia (NHIA) Young Achiever Award winner Jack Laurie and National Herd Improvement Association Chief Executive Officer Sara Merckel.

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Our Mission

NHIA IS THE TRUSTED LEADER AND VOICE FOR THE HERD IMPROVEMENT INDUSTRY

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For further information regarding this media release please contact Sara Merckel on 0411 819 195 or sara@nhia.org.au. Visit www.nhia.org.au

About NHIA: Formed in 1995 as the successor to the Herd Improvement Organisation Victoria. The National Herd Improvement Association of Australia Incorporated (NHIA) is the trusted leader and voice for the herd improvement industry, that promotes herd improvement for the Australian sector, providing a range of services to its membership, and through that membership, to benefit herd improvement across dairy, beef and ruminant species. The member base includes organisations involved directly in the provision of herd improvement services, a range of activities that lead to productivity gains to farmers as well as herd industry improvement suppliers.

NHIA's values are trusted collaboration, championing industry, elevating standards, empowering members.

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