

Ridgefield Farm Management

Steve Whitmire, Owner and President

Steve grew up working on the farm all through his childhood and through high school. He attended North Carolina State University and received a degree in Ag Economics in 1973. Upon graduation from college, he worked in the telecommunications industry. Afterward, Steve pursued interests in other business including mining, oil and gas exploration. When he lost his dad in a farm related accident in 1998, once again Steve became fully engaged in the farm and took over its management.

In 2005, he sold his crushed stone businesses. Steve's wife, Mary Beth, and he purchased the two-thirds interest in the farm that was owned by his siblings and their children to pursue the cattle business full time. Currently, Steve oversees all of the farm business interests. Including maintaining relationships with the USDA-NRCS, Cherokee County Soil and Water/NC Water Quality, Western Carolina University, NC State and The University of Georgia, as well community organizations. Additionally, he is the farm interface with The Land Trust for The Little Tennessee; the organization that is in charge of monitoring the farm's compliance with their Conservation Easement, which covers about 867 acres of the farm's total of 1,023 acres. Steve serves on the Braunvieh Association of America (BAA) Board of Directors as well as the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Board of Directors.

In 2009 Steve founded Brasstown Beef, LLC; a branded beef program, that utilizes calves produced by Ridgefield Farm, as well as calves that are purchased under the progeny purchase *Bull Deal Program* initiated by Ridgefield in 2002. The calves are fed out on the farm and then processed at local small family owned USDA inspected processing facilities. Brasstown Beef is an "all natural", dry aged, premium product available in numerous restaurants and retail outlets in Western North Carolina and North Georgia.

Nathan Clackum, Farm Manager

Nathan is in charge of day-to-day operations of the farm. He is responsible for personnel, livestock, and leased land management, as well as Ridgefield Farm pasture and hay management. This includes animal health, animal breeding, embryo work, calving, bull and heifer development, cattle measurements and data acquisition, evaluation of breeding stock, marketing and sales strategies, sales catalogs and development of advertising programs.

Nathan also manages delivery of feeder calves under the farm's progeny purchase program, the Ridgefield Farm *Bull Deal*. He oversees and runs the on site cattle alliance/feeding operation which supplies Brasstown Beef with finished cattle for its beef program, including ration development, commodity purchases and ensuring compliance with the third party verification company's criteria.

Nathan graduated with a degree in Animal Science from Berry College. He came to Ridgefield Farm with 12 years of experience in the cattle business, including financial analysis and budgeting for Rollins Ranches, running a 250 cow commercial cow herd, and most recently serving as Beef Herdsman for Berry College.

Michelle Clayton, Office Manager

Michelle handles all office and accounting functions for Ridgefield Farm and Brasstown Beef. Her responsibilities include company taxes, accounts payable, accounts receivable, generation of financial reports, communications, and computer operations.

She also assists with photography, advertising and compiling marketing materials. Additionally, she manages Cow Sense, the cattle management system utilized by the operation, and handles the registrations and transfers of ownership of cattle sold by the farm.

Michelle also functions as an Administrative Assistant to Steve. She has a B.A. in Business Administration from North Georgia College. Michelle's previous work experience was primarily in real estate office management and sales; including running her own business.