

Ridgefield Farm Management

Steve Whitmire, Owner and President

Steve grew up working on the farm and received a degree in Ag Economics from North Carolina State University. Upon graduation, he pursued interests in business including oil and gas exploration as well as mining. When he lost his dad in a farm related accident in 1998, he took on the responsibilities of the farm.

In 2005, he sold his quarry business. 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 to maintain industry involvement by the farm.

Recently Steve founded Brasstown Beef, LLC; a branded beef program that is affiliated with Ridgefield Farm; which is the supplier of fat cattle for the beef program. He manages the operations of this company in addition to his duties with the farm.

Jason Bates, Farm Manager

Jason is in charge of day-to-day operations of the farm. Additionally he is responsible for marketing the cattle and overseeing the Ridgefield show cattle program. As farm manager, he is specifically responsible for personnel, livestock, and leased land management, as well as Ridgefield Farm pasture and hay management. His duties include: animal health, animal breeding, embryo work, calving, development, cattle data acquisition, cattle measurements and evaluation of breeding stock, marketing and sales strategies, sales catalogs and development of advertising programs.

Jason also manages delivery of feeder calves under the farm's progeny purchase program, The Ridgefield Farm *Braunvieh Bull Deal*. He oversees and runs the fat cattle 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.

Jason attended Cornell University in Animal Science and Ag Education after attending Northeastern Oklahoma A&M. In 1994, he trained at World Wide College of Auctioneering. Jason came to Ridgefield Farm with 15 years of experience in the cattle business, including most recently 7 years at a large purebred cattle operation in Missouri.



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.

For Ridgefield Farm she assists with photography, advertising and 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.