

## Press Release – For Immediate Release

# Belgian Blue Beef Double Grand Champions

**Dec. 7, 2004 - Regina, Saskatchewan** – David Sparks of Sparky Blues in Zealandia, Saskatchewan, took home both the Grand Champion Heifer and Grand Champion Steer Carcass ribbons at this year's Canadian Western Agribition in Regina, Saskatchewan. Both winning carcasses were Belgian Blue Beef (BBB) - Charolais commercial crosses. The BBB cross Grand Champion Steer win ended a 28-year domination by Limousin Steer entries. It was common knowledge that breeds other than Limousin had almost given-up hope on ever winning the carcass competition, but this double-win means that's all behind now.

"My dad didn't even believe me when I called him up to let him know we won" declared the winner, David Sparks, "he called one of my sisters just to make sure I wasn't playing a joke on him!" The Sparks run a family affair with parents, Les and Connie, involved in farm operations. They've been using BBB genetics in their herd for over 11 years.

David, who hadn't entered cattle in last year's competition, was pleasantly surprised at the win because "the winning animals got no preferential treatment or feed, we just picked them at the last minute and off they went in the truck". A fellow Saskatchewan Belgian Blue Beef farmer had convinced David to participate in this year's carcass competition.

"Now that we've got these double Champion wins for Belgian Blues, I'm sure next year a lot more BBB crosses and other breeds will participate in the Carcass Competition," David added.

When asked why he sticks with BBB, David's answer is fast, "Blues are so neat. They make a visible difference on any beef or dairy cattle, you don't need a big show cow to see a definite improvement. The shapes are rounder and meatier". And the farm's mostly AAA beef fetches a good price on the market. "You stick with what works", David stated.

"We could have sold several BBB bulls if we had had them at Agribition!" exclaimed Ken Miller BBB breeder since 1992. "We have orders we cannot fill at the moment, it's nice to be in a situation of over demand versus supply." He added "if some farmers still have concerns about calving with BBB, all I can tell them is that after 12 years, I can honestly say I don't have any more calving problems with my Blues than any other breed and it's the same with other commercial breeders using BB Bulls." On another encouraging note for the Belgian Blue breed, Ken got top prices at Assiniboia SK for his calves this year, despite the slumping beef market, "I think it's because folks know the yield will be higher with BBB, and that was reflected in the price" he explained.

"Double Grand Champion Carcass winnings are significant for the Belgian Blue breed in Canada and internationally" commented Pierre Mallieu, Chief Executive of Belgian Blue International.

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### **Info and High Resolution Agribition Show Pictures available:**

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### **More contacts and sources of information**

- Canadian Belgian Blue Association – website: [www.belgianblueinternational.com/member/cbb](http://www.belgianblueinternational.com/member/cbb)
- David Sparks, Winner, Sparky Belgian Blues – Tel.: 306.882.3313
- Ken Miller – Tel: 306.868.4903
- Belgian Blue International (BBI) – [www.belgianblueinternational.com](http://www.belgianblueinternational.com)
- Canadian Western Agribition – [www.agribition.com](http://www.agribition.com)