

Agenda Item No.

AGENDA ITEM BRIEFING

Submitted by: Walter V. Wendler, President
West Texas A&M University

Subject: Authorization to Award an Honorary Degree to Paul F. Engler

Proposed Board Action:

Authorize the president of West Texas A&M University (WTAMU) to award an Honorary Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration & Agriculture degree to Paul F. Engler.

Background Information:

In accordance with Section 1.2 of System Policy, [11.07, Granting of Honorary Degrees](#), WTAMU submits this request to award an Honorary Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration and Agriculture degree to Paul Engler. This recognition is in tribute to his distinguished career and for the positive and significant impact his lifetime of service has made on WTAMU, the state of Texas, and the United States of America.

This nomination received unanimous support from the Paul and Virginia Engler College of Business Faculty Ad Hoc committee and Department of Agriculture Sciences Ad Hoc committee, as required in the WTAMU Rule *11.07.99.W1*, Granting of Honorary Degrees.

With Board authorization, this honorary degree will be presented to Mr. Paul Engler at WTAMU's commencement ceremony in May 2022.

A&M System Funding or Other Financial Implications:

None.

Strategic Plan Imperative(s) this Item Advances:

Mr. Paul F. Engler is a highly distinguished business leader and philanthropist. As the pioneering founder of the fed-cattle industry in Texas, his success was built on innovation, operational efficiencies, safety programs, research and environmental stewardship. This recognition honors his association and contributions to WTAMU in achieving Imperative 5 of The Texas A&M University System strategic plan to provide services that respond to the needs of the people of Texas and contribute to the strength of the state's economy.

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WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Office of the President

January 10, 2022

Members, Board of Regents
The Texas A&M University System

Subject: Authorization to Award an Honorary Degree to Paul F. Engler

I recommend approval of the following minute order:

“The president of West Texas A&M University is authorized to award an Honorary Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration and Agriculture degree to Paul F. Engler.”

Respectfully submitted,

Walter V. Wendler, President

Approval Recommended:

Approved for Legal Sufficiency:

John Sharp
Chancellor

Ray Bonilla
General Counsel

Billy Hamilton
Deputy Chancellor and
Chief Financial Officer

James R. Hallmark, Ph.D.
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

West Texas A&M University
Honorary Degree Candidate Summary of Accomplishments

Mr. Paul F. Engler

Candidate for Honorary Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration & Agriculture

Paul F. Engler was born in 1929 and grew up in the small town of Stuart, Nebraska with a population of only 450 people. His father owned a gas station, but Paul learned early on that he favored the cattle industry over the family business. At the age of seven, Paul was responsible for raising a cow on four acres of land. His father purchased a little more land within two years, and Paul grew the stock under his charge to seven cows. At age 12, he bought and managed his first cattle herd of 100 head to work in partnership with his father by the age of thirteen.

After completing high school, Paul left the family farm for the University of Nebraska and used the proceeds from his first cattle sales to fund his education. He studied agriculture and graduated in 1951.

Upon graduation, Paul worked for a cattle trading company buying feeder cattle before taking a government job working with regional farmers to improve crop yields. Dissatisfied with the predictability of a government job, Paul went to work for several prominent ranchers in Nebraska. Louis Dinklage, one of the leading ranchers at the time, noticed that Paul was very talented concerning buying and managing feeder cattle. After a few years of working for Dinklage, Paul observed that West Texas was a prime location where cattle and grain could come together to be shipped to other places around the country. Paul realized that the supply chain efficiency combined with the mild climate made cities in the Texas Panhandle, such as Hereford, ideal for large-scale cattle feeding operations.

After establishing the first cattle feed operation in Texas, Paul was offered a lucrative management position with Iowa Beef Processors (IBP) as the head of carcass division. During his tenure, he initiated the establishment and design of the IBP Beef Slaughter Plant at Amarillo, Texas, then the largest beef harvesting plant in the U.S.

The processing side of the cattle business was not his passion and after three years, he went back to West Texas to make a formal effort to establish a cattle feeding operation. With partner, Tom Dittmer, Paul co-founded Cactus Feeders in 1975. His vision to start feeding cattle on a large scale in the Texas Panhandle was a reversal of the then practice of shipping raw materials, namely grain and homegrown beef, out of the state. Under his leadership, Cactus Feeders became the largest cattle-feeding company in the world. Today, at least 1 of 25 cattle around the nation is Cactus beef coming from Cactus cattle.

Mr. Engler established the first employee stock ownership plan in the fed-cattle industry during his time at Cactus Feeders. He also expanded fed-cattle operations internationally. Since its beginning, the company has been an early adaptor of innovations, ranging from operational efficiencies and safety programs to research and environmental stewardship. Cactus Feeders ranks as one of the 50 largest companies in Texas and is on the Forbes list for the top 500 private companies in the U.S.