

2024 YF&R SLC KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Johnny "Joey" Jones

Combat-wounded Staff Sergeant (Ret.) Johnny "Joey" Jones, a Marine Corps veteran from Dalton, Georgia. Jones was deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan where he was an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician (IED). He was injured by an IED in 2010 which resulted in the loss of both legs above the knee and severe damage to his right forearm and wrists. Jones turned his life-changing disability into a mission to support fellow veterans.

Following intensive recovery, he completed his education at Georgetown University. After losing his childhood best friend to PTSD-related suicide in 2012, Jones became a prominent advocate for veterans' issues. He has advised Presidents Obama and George W. Bush on military challenges and authored the New York Times bestseller "Unbroken Bonds of Battle" in 2023.

Jones continues his advocacy through roles such as serving on the Board of Directors for the national veteran nonprofit Boot Campaign. Jones still resides in Georgia with his wife Meg, his son Joseph, their daughter Margo and two dogs Chief and Tucker.

Kevin & Lydia Yon

Yon Family Farms, a family-owned cattle operation in South Carolina, was founded by Kevin, a first-generation Angus breeder. Kevin entered the cattle business at age twelve by borrowing money to purchase his first Angus heifer. He met his wife Lydia at Clemson University, where they both studied Animal Science. After managing Congaree Farms near Columbia for seven years, they started their own Angus operation, Yon Family Farms in Ridge Spring, South Carolina in 1996. With three young children and 100 Angus females, they began their journey, which remains their sole income source today.



Yon Family Farms hosts biannual Spring and Fall Production Sales, selling approximately 450 registered bulls and 250 females annually. Their forage-based operation focuses on providing genetics for progressive commercial cattlemen. In 2015, the Yons expanded by acquiring a neighboring pecan business and its retail store. Operating under the second generation, their Nut House and Country Market offers homemade pecan candies, locally-grown produce, and Yon Ranch to Table-Certified Angus Beef.