Recipient of the 2026 IETS Distinguished Practitioner Award

Dr. Charles R. Looney

Dr. Charles R. Looney grew up in Camden, Arkansas, and later attended the University of Arkansas (U of A), where he completed his BA (1978) and MS (1979) in animal science. As an undergraduate, he was a member of the Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity, Alpha Zeta Honor Society, the Animal Science Club, and the 1976 Livestock Judging team. He then pursued his PhD in animal science at Louisiana State University (LSU) under the direction of Dr. Robert A. Godke. At LSU, he was initiated into Gamma Sigma Delta and graduated in 1983. In 2014, he was honored by the U of A Science Department by being named an Advanced Graduate of Distinction. In 2023, he was inducted into the Arkansas Agricultural Hall of Fame.

After completing his PhD, Looney served Granada Biosciences for 10 years as a senior scientist, working in embryo transfer (ET) production. He was a member of the team that produced the first embryo-derived bovine clones and the first recombinant bovine FSH/LH. While working for Granada, he moved to the Hanford, California, office and established a cloning and IVF laboratory, working primarily with dairy clients. Looney also developed a cloning and IVF laboratory in Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom. Both laboratories were successful in producing cloned and IVF offspring.

Following Granada, he offered private consulting to ET companies in Australia, France, Hungary, Mexico, and Brazil. Looney demonstrated the first Aloka curvilinear vaginal probe to Professor Chris Polge at the Animal Research Station in Cambridge, England. In 1992, Looney joined Trans Ova Genetics in Sioux Center, Iowa, as technical director, where he performed ET and managed their first IVF laboratory. He published the first journal article using transvaginal oocyte retrieval and IVF for problem cows and developed dominant follicle removal prior to superovulation to improve embryo production in donor cows.

As president of Ultimate Genetics (Franklin, TX), he and his team, in collaboration with leading partners, produced the first transgenic cloned calves and the first adult cloned bull. In 2001, he started OvaGenix in Bryan, Texas, which operated successfully for just under 20 years with over 600 clients in 5 countries. In 2018, Dr. Looney accepted the position of professor of cattle improvement for the State of Arkansas, from which he recently retired. He worked with extension research stations across the state and visited many cattle producers while also speaking and teaching at cattlemen's events.

Looney has spent the past 45 years traveling and promoting the cattle industry in the United States and around the world. He has spoken or worked in over 15 countries, setting up ET or IVF programs in Australia, Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Mexico, India, and France. He has been a member of IETS since 1978 and has served as a governor. He has also been a member of the American Embryo Transfer Association (AETA) since its formation and has served two terms on the AETA Board. In 2019, he was recognized by the AETA with the President's Award for Outstanding Service to the organization and the cattle industry.

Looney's research is continuous and has been documented in 31 reviewed publications, 76 abstracts, and numerous proceedings. He has sponsored 25 master's and PhD theses and dissertations from his time as an adjunct professor at Texas A&M University, The Ohio State University, LSU, and U of A.

Looney and his wife, Cathryn, married in 1978 and have three children and four grandchildren. When not behind a cow, he volunteers at his church and the Hope Lions Club, where he has served as president. He attributes his success in life to his faith in God and the support of his family.

It is with great honor that we present to you a most worthy recipient of the 2026 IETS Distinguished Practitioner Award, Dr. Charles R. Looney.

Previous Recipients

John Hasler (2025)