

The Ripple Effect



Julie White

I remember the day my parents asked me if I wanted to show cattle. Even 8-year-old me could understand the cost and time commitment, or maybe it was them laying out the details of the effort I would need to put in — and not just in preparation for the showing. No, this wouldn't be a seasonal affair. It meant going into the local bank with my parents and applying for a small agriculture loan with the one commercial cow my dad gave me when I was 2 years old and her progeny as collateral.

With that loan and the help of my parents, I would head to Kansas and purchase a bred female who later that fall would have an October heifer calf. I named her Juliette, clever I know, and thus began my registered Shorthorn herd.

That decision had a ripple effect on my life. Because of the livestock industry and being involved in a state and national junior breed association, 4-H and FFA, and along with some urging from my family, I was able to grow from a kid who could hardly talk to strangers to participating in speech contests and serving on officer teams.

I chose to attend Kansas State University, where I didn't know a soul, to study agricultural communications with a dream of working for a cattle breed association,

and I've had the opportunity to learn firsthand how livestock is raised in other countries, spending summers in Costa Rica and Sierra Leone.

I've met people along the way who have selflessly given of their time to teach, mentor and provide me opportunities to grow and to learn.

This all brought me to conclusion of my first weeks here at the American Hereford Association (AHA). The pride of the Hereford heritage and legacy is palatable, and the excitement over this breed is contagious. What an experience it was to join Hereford breeders in attending this year's Annual Meeting and the American Royal National Hereford Show and seeing the packed house at the Ladies of the Royal sale.

Maybe it was sitting in on the Annual Meeting and hearing the direction for the Association in 2015, reading up on the critical topics discussed at the Hereford Genetic Summit by industry experts, AHA leadership and Hereford breeders, or the current economic situation of the cattle industry, but I can't help but think about the many decisions to be made on the horizon.

Hereford breeders are making choices each day to improve genetics, implement technology tools, meet market demands and

continually improve the breed. I'm looking forward to sharing your story with fellow breeders, commercial cattlemen and the cattle industry.

In this issue you will find a summary of the many Hereford events and activities that took place Oct. 31-Nov. 2 in Kansas City, Mo. We will be "continuing the conversation" from the Hereford Genetic Summit in upcoming issues of the *Hereford World*. The inaugural feature in this series focuses on the importance of taking care of your customer and providing added value to Hereford genetics. Be sure to make a stop at the special National Western Stock Show section.

Thanks to each one who warmly welcomed me into the Hereford family. And for those who were unable to make it to Kansas City, I hope to meet you at the next show, sale or Hereford event.

I would also like to thank the Hereford Publications Inc. staff, the AHA staff, the Board of Directors and AHA members for the opportunity to work for an industry that shaped me, and to do something I enjoy each day.

It's my hope that each time you receive the *Hereford World* you will find content that makes you proud to be a Hereford breeder and while you are flipping through the pages, learn a little something too. **HW**