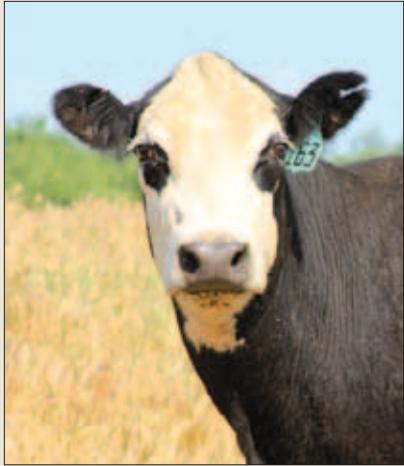


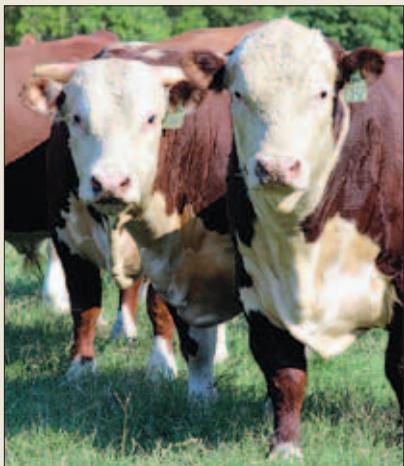
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Proven Performers

Greenview Farms has found success marketing Hereford genetics in the Southeast by using a breeding philosophy that focuses on performance and quality from grazing.

by Angie Stump Denton

With the goal to produce quality cattle in a sustainable environment, Greenview Farms has proven Hereford genetics can perform in the sub-tropical environment of the Gulf Coast region.

"We have the data to prove Hereford genetics can add pounds and efficiency to the commercial cattle industry," says

Greenview's owner, Jonny Harris, a fifth-generation cattleman and farmer from Screven, Ga.

The late Winton Harris, Jonny's father, began the Harris family's involvement in the polled Hereford business in 1942 (see "About Greenview"). Greenview Farms is now the oldest registered Hereford herd in Georgia.

Today the operation is a family business that consists of a cattle operation that produces Hereford and registered F1 Braford's by crossing Hereford females with Brahman bulls, as well as a diversified farming operation (see "Utilizing resources").

In 1981 after Jonny had been encouraged by many of his bull and

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"Herefords have been left out of many herd mixes for up to 10 or 15 years. Adding Hereford back to their program gives the producer the hybrid vigor they are looking for."

— Jonny Harris

About Greenview

In 1860 Harris ancestors purchased land in the Wayne County area of southeast Georgia. Through the generations, family members have continued to farm the land and raise cattle.

In 1942 Winton, a fourth generation Harris cattleman, and his wife, Emily, established a polled Hereford herd, thus making Greenview Farms the oldest, continuously active polled Hereford breeder in the state of Georgia. Winton was a keen cattleman and farmer, who produced cattle that were fed by foraging and grazing alone.

Winton continued to have an active role in the operation of the farm until his death in 2005. His love of agriculture was passed down to his son Jonny and grandson Paul. Together they continue the operation of Greenview Farms along with Jonny's wife, Toni, and Emily.

"Seeing Hereford and Braford cattle grazing on green pastures, knowing that we have records and performance data to predict profitability, is a sight to behold," Toni says. "Our family is blessed to have been in the cattle business for the past 70 years."

Paul and his wife, Lou, have two boys. Paul adds, "Hopefully my sons will continue the legacy at Greenview." **HW**



The father-and-son team work together to manage the cattle, farming and timber operation.



The Harris family made the decision to produce F1 Brafords in the early '80s.

heifer customers to produce F1 heifers, he traded Hereford bulls for red Brahman bulls to test the market. The first F1s were sold in 1983, and today the Harris family breeds half its herd to produce registered Herefords and half its herd to produce F1 Brafords and enjoys a strong demand for both resulting offspring.

Home to productive Hereford mommas, you won't find a Braford cow or bull on the farm. All F1 Brafords are marketed.

"Many commercial breeders, especially 'black cow' producers, have realized the advantage of adding Hereford," Jonny says. "Because we have identified genetics that work well in our sub-tropical environment. Hereford breeders are now sitting on a gold mine with the opportunity to supply bulls to cover this region's black cow herd and to supply heifers to be foundations for a commercial herd."

He says the Hereford advantage includes increased pounds at weaning, improved fertility, superior maternal traits and improved manageability (docility). "Herefords have been left

out of many herd mixes for up to 10 or 15 years," he explains. "Adding Hereford back to their program gives the producer the hybrid vigor they are looking for."

The program

With 400 cows Jonny and Paul — Jonny's son and partner — have a 120-day calving season from mid-October to mid-February.

Replacement heifers are bred to Hereford bulls and expected to calve in mid-December. They are artificially inseminated (AI) one time before being put with a bull. After the first-calf heifers calve, they are immediately put with a bull.

"We have 10 years of data proving this system with our first-calf heifers. We get 95% of the 2-year-olds rebred and move them up to the first part of our calving season with their second calf," Jonny says.

This process also identifies less fertile females early and allows Jonny and Paul to eliminate them from the herd. Along with the first-calf heifers, about 60 cows are AI bred each year. The rest of the herd is bred naturally to either Brahman or Hereford bulls.



Greenview Farms is the oldest registered polled Hereford herd in Georgia. A Whole-Herd Total Performance Records (TPR™) breeder, Greenview collects birth, weaning and yearling data and submits them to the AHA.



Each year the Harris family markets about 60 Hereford bulls off the farm.



Half of the Greenview cow herd is bred to Hereford bulls while the other half is bred to red Brahman bulls to produce F1 Braford.



The F1 bulls are also in high demand. For several years Greenview Farms has been the second largest producer of Braford in the U.S. by number of animals registered.



Replacement heifers are bred to calve in mid-December. After calving they are immediately turned with a bull. This practice has led to a 95% breed-back conception rate and helped move the females up in the calving cycle. To remain in the cow herd, a heifer must calve at 2 years old, perform on grass, have a good udder with good milk flow and produce a calf every year.

The female

Good Hereford mommas are key to Greenview Farms' success. Jonny says the Greenview female must survive on grass. She has depth, rib and volume and is structurally sound.

He expects all females to have good maternal traits that have been passed from their mothers. Other important traits are pigmentation and, a given for Southeastern cattle, a slick hair coat.

"To remain in our herd, a heifer must calve at 2 years old, perform on grass, have a good udder with good milk flow and produce a calf every year," Jonny explains.

The Harris family does not buy many females; their plan is to make genetic improvements with bull purchases or semen.

"We feel what makes a good cow herd is a group of half sisters," Jonny says. "This adds uniformity and consistency to the offspring produced." The Harrises also purchase half brothers to use in their breeding program.

Jonny adds, "If a producer comes here to purchase an animal they can be confident they are evaluating cattle that are the result of 70 years of selecting cattle that will work on criteria we demand to thrive in our environment. They can be assured if they buy a bull from me they know what it is going to do."

Marketing plan

Annually Jonny and Paul select between 120 and 130 bulls to develop and market. They also offer between 50 and 150 open heifers each year — Hereford and F1 Braford.

Jonny says the Harris family originally targeted the Gulf Coast states with its marketing efforts, but in recent years, the demand has expanded and migrated north.

One of the family's goals is to continue producing seedstock with quality to meet the purebred breeder's needs and quantity to serve the commercial breeder while supplying both with the information they need to make their selections.

The Harrises participate in two all-breed consignment bull sales each year with the remaining bulls

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Serving the industry

The Harris family believe in the beef industry, and although their plates are full with responsibilities on the farm, they have found time to serve the beef industry and community.

"Through my activity in the Georgia Cattlemen's Association, I saw need for farmers to stand up and tell their story," Jonny says. "I became aware other people don't understand what we as cattlemen and farmers do day to day. So if we don't tell our story who will?"

In November Jonny was elected to serve on the American Hereford Association Board of Directors. He says during his term on the Board, his goal is to continue to move the Hereford breed forward with the collection and promotion of science-based data that validate the Hereford advantages specifically related to the commercial industry.

Other leadership roles held by Jonny include Georgia Hereford Association director, United Braford Breeders director and former treasurer, former Georgia Cattlemen's Association (GCA) regional vice president and executive committee member, Florida Cattlemen's Association member, former Wayne County Livestock Association president, former Southeast Georgia Cattlemen's Association president, Wayne County Farm Bureau director and Wayne County Soil and Water Conservation District supervisor.

He represents GCA on the National Cattlemen's Beef Association property rights and environmental committee, has testified at a U.S. Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Interior listening session and has participated in two Washington, D.C. fly-ins promoting sustainable agriculture and conservation.

Working with the local chapter of the Wild Turkey Federation, the Harris family annually hosts turkey hunts for disabled and terminally ill youth and a separate hunt for local youth. **HW**

and heifers offered private treaty off the farm. Steers and cull females are marketed at the local sale barn.

When selecting bulls for consignment sales, Jonny attempts to sort the bulls into three groups based on quality. He picks two Herefords

and one Braford out of each group so buyers have a chance to see the types available back at the ranch. Jonny says the consignment sales are more than a chance to sell the bulls he takes to the sales. They are a chance to promote his herd and to get buyers

interested in visiting the farm to evaluate his entire offering.

Customer service is important to the Harris family. Jonny's philosophy is that it is important to build relationships with his customers. He always stays around to help

customers load out after the sale and to make sure they are happy with the purchases they made.

The demand for the F1 female is so strong that for the past 10 years Jonny has had the F1 females sold before they were born. In recent years, he's seen the same demand for Hereford females.

"At Greenview, we are honored when a customer calls about our cattle," Jonny says. "When they leave our farm I hope they feel they have been treated hospitably, shown good cattle that are at least as good or better than they had been represented before their visit and the producers feel they've been given information and data to help select their purchase."

Health program

Greenview has followed a vigorous herd health program for more than 50 years, and for the last 10 years has followed Pfizer's signature protocol.

The family advocates herd health by hosting demonstrations and field days locally and regionally to help educate fellow cattlemen.

Jonny is committed to making sure all Greenview offerings meet strict health screenings. All bulls are BVD/PI tested, and for seven years, cultured samples have been taken for Johnes disease to meet Class A certification.

Looking forward

Jonny is a strong believer in continuing education and the need for research. "If I was producing the same thing I did 10 years ago I'd be out of business," he says. "Without research we are dead ducks."

The Harris family participates in educational programs sponsored by Georgia Extension and also attends or hosts two or three field days per year. "Learning from projects what not to do is just as beneficial as the ones proving what we should do. To continue to progress, we've got to make improvements and learn from research."

Jonny says he is excited about the future of Hereford genetics in the Southeast. "Commercial producers are realizing the advantage the Hereford cow brings to their operation while at the same time the value of heterosis when crossing their existing herd with Hereford bulls."

Likewise, the future of Greenview Farms looks to be successful. With the fifth and sixth generations of Harris cattlemen at the helm and the seventh generation learning the ropes watching Dad and Grandpa, there's no doubt raising quality Herefords will continue to be the tradition for years to come. **HW**

Utilizing resources

Located in southeast Georgia, Greenview Farms Inc. is a diversified operation. Its 3,500 acres are divided almost equally between pastures, timber and row crops with its cattle operation, row crops and timber land enhancing one another.

Six generations of Harrises have worked on the farm that specializes in producing Herefords, F1 Braford, hay, haylage, cotton, corn, soybeans, peanuts, pecans, vegetables, annual forages, pine straw and timber.

The farming enterprise is currently the sole source of income for three generations of Harrises who work on the farm.

"My daddy and granddaddy taught me that if you take care of the land, it will take care of you," says Jonny Harris. "I am reaping the benefits of years of good stewardship as is evident throughout the farm."

Unfenced fields are not an option at Greenview Farms. Jonny says the farming operation complements the cow herd with the cows gleaming the fields after cotton picking and pasture grazing the woods.

"We don't feed anything we don't grow," Jonny explains. "The only thing not grown here on the farm is the mineral."

The farming operation includes the production of horse-quality Bermuda hay that is shipped across the Southeast from Georgia to Texas and also the production of other forages for baleage. Currently, through a SARE Producer Grant, Jonny is working in conjunction with the University of Georgia in forage trial plots, which will supply data to better understand the value of high-quality annuals for baleage.

Conservation practices utilized by the Harris family include:

- 1) whole farm conservation planning;
- 2) crop rotation;
- 3) conservation tillage;
- 4) small grain cover crops;
- 5) forage and soil sampling;
- 6) integrated pest management;
- 7) cross fencing;
- 8) grassed waterways;
- 9) nutrient management;
- 10) forest management;
- 11) heavy use areas; and
- 12) wildlife habitat management.

"Our family has been blessed to be stewards of this land for 150 years," Jonny says. "It is an honor, privilege and challenge to feed about 600 consumers a day as a family. We don't take it likely as there are fewer and fewer of us."

Through the years, the Harris family has been recognized for its conservation and stewardship practices. In 2007 the farm received the Georgia Governor's Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Award and in 2009 was named the National Cattlemen's Beef Association Region II Environmental Stewardship Award Winner. **HW**



In 2009 Greenview Farms was named the National Cattlemen's Beef Association Region II Environmental Stewardship Award Winner. Pictured at the awards ceremony (l to r) are: Winton Jr.; Emily; Jonny; Toni; Rita Barrow, Natural Resources Conservation Service district conservationist, Paul and Lou.

