

The Future Couldn't be Brighter

Dwight D. Eisenhower said, "Neither a wise man nor a brave man lies down on the tracks of history to wait for the train of the future to run over him."

The U.S. President and Commander of Allied Armed Forces during World War II would have been proud of what this organization and membership has accomplished in the last decade and a half. We sure haven't been laying down on the tracks.

There was a time this business was stuck on the tracks and the future almost slipped by, but



Craig Huffhines

braver and wiser leaders were not willing to let that happen. Even though the Hereford leadership could not foresee this incredible time the breed is now experiencing, they put trust in each other, they worked tirelessly to institute a commercial beef industry focus and they decided to think positively. They supported a young naïve family man to execute their plan and develop a team of young industry enthusiasts. They gave new staff people a chance to grow, gain experience and make mistakes. Their attitude became one of success even before success was realized. Because of it, opportunity has been created for a whole new generation of Hereford breeders.

As Hereford breeders you possess amazing resilience. You have a passion for this business that transcends understanding. You take care of your kids and provide youth the opportunity to attach to this industry. You truly understand that sustainability of your farm and ranch resource starts first with your family and then taking care of the operation. You all represent the very small minority of Americans who truly understand what it means to be a family business owner. You understand the blood, sweat and tears that go into being a seedstock producer. Few in this country have an understanding of your commitment and sacrifice.

It's been an honor and a privilege to serve as your executive vice president. I have grown up in this business, not working for anyone else my entire adult career. There is a sense of pride that swells up in me when I see \$8,000 to \$11,000 bull sale averages. It's an emotional feeling when I think about the Meeks family at Upstream Ranch in Taylor, Neb. They beat all odds during the toughest of times to reach a pinnacle this past month to gross \$2.9 million on about 300 Hereford bulls and 50 females. I'm still in awe of the mass of people who attended the Mile High Night National Hereford sale in Denver. The Hereford breed is doing astounding things!

The American Hereford Association (AHA) will transition to new leadership. This will be a healthy change. The process will make the Board stronger and even more resilient. My prayer is that whoever is given the opportunity, you will all extend to that person the same courtesy, reassurance and support you gave me when I first started. Most of the time all that's needed is encouragement for people to do great things.

Thank you all for your support and the trust and faith you placed in me here at the AHA. My wife, Mary Jon, and I are forever grateful. Go Hereford! **HW**

Huffhines Pursues New Opportunity; Hereford Leadership in Transition

Craig Huffhines, AHA executive vice president, has announced his resignation after 18 years at the helm of AHA. Huffhines has accepted the position of executive vice president of the American Quarter Horse Association with offices located in Amarillo, Texas.

"We are going to miss Craig's enthusiasm, charisma and steady leadership," says Eric Walker, AHA president from Tennessee. "However, the AHA now has one of the most dynamic and professional staffs in the livestock industry and we are confident that we will transition into a new phase of leadership."

Huffhines will remain on the AHA staff until early March. The AHA Board is assembling a leadership search committee to assess the prospects for filling the position. In the meantime, AHA staff members will continue business as usual.

"I have spent my entire professional career with the AHA and it has been an honor for me to serve such wonderful people for so long," Huffhines says. "What an extraordinary experience it has been to work with Hereford families across America to rebuild this great breed of cattle to the prominent position it now finds itself.

"The American Quarter Horse Association is another iconic organization that has offered my family an opportunity to get back to our roots in Texas. My wife and I will always cherish our many friendships across the Hereford industry and we look forward to a new exciting chapter ahead." **HW**