

Strategic Planning Committee Formed

Is it time to revisit the idea of a combined national women's organization to serve the needs of women in the Hereford cattle business? Recent discussion between the American Hereford Women (AHW) and National Organization of Poll-ettes (NOP) boards has revealed that there are many who think it is time to revisit this idea, and to seriously look at the possibilities for making the most of what we all have in common.

The goal in this endeavor is to ensure that we are doing the best job possible in supporting our industry, our breed of cattle and the junior members in our association.

Doing the best possible job *may* be doing it as one organization, maybe not; that's the committee's job — to have a look and to offer an opinion and a potential course of action.

Both boards are mindful of something every organization needs to monitor — relevance. At a time when so many of us own both horned and polled cattle, are we relevant organizations in the eyes of our fellow breeders? Are we relevant organizations in the eyes of younger women in the Hereford business?

It's no secret that organizations that fail to monitor relevance or

fail to continuously renew and update their mission statements and services to members are typically doomed to becoming smaller and quieter versions of their former selves. Eventually they fade into the history books rather than remaining vibrant, growing and active in the daily events of the community with which they are affiliated. Before I go on, everyone who wants to fade into the sunset, please hold up your hand!

As representatives at the national level, the AHW and NOP boards have agreed to form the strategic planning committee (SPC) to delve into these issues. We know your expectation is that we will represent you. We also know our duty is to pay attention to signs of change and to act in the best interest of the organization in a proactive manner.

SPC members are: Cheryl Evans, AHW, chair; Susan Gebhart, NOP, chair; Betsy Beck, NOP; Mary Ann Berg, NOP; Deb Carlson, AHW; and Della Ehlke, AHW.

It is our universal opinion that waiting until change is upon us or until we have become irrelevant to those we serve would be irresponsible. By failing to address the potential need for change, we would likely cast our organizations in the role of reacting to cattle that got out rather than fixing the fence we can see needs some work.

Our current plan is to:

- 1) Discuss the possibilities.
- 2) Collect input from our respective memberships.
- 3) Evaluate the potential of a single organization.
- 4) Assess the acceptability of such an organization to our current memberships.
- 5) Report back with analysis and a plan.

It's a tall order, but not one that's out of reach. Women of common interests with hearts in the "right

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Membership — \$10 annually

Jessye Goertz

79483 Hwy. 2, *Berwyn, NE 68814*

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Web site: ahw.hereford.org

place" can engage in a process that seeks to honor our respective legacies and to support our breed, our youth and our members.

We'll ask the question, "How can we best support activities and programs of interest to a new generation of women who will take up where we leave off in continuing the traditions and history of our red, whiteface cattle?"

We hope you will monitor this process and call or e-mail when you have thoughts or ideas. We absolutely want to hear from our members to ensure we leave no stone unturned in the process of considering possibilities. We'll announce news on both the AHW and NOP Web sites.

We'll also have a blog dedicated for those interested to learn the news and offer feedback at barnaisle.blogspot.com.

Open your minds and hearts to the possibility and let's see where we end up. Together, separate, whatever — we just need to know we are doing the right thing for the breed, our members and, most importantly, our collective future. **HW**

National Organization of Poll-ettes

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498 Hwy. 133, *Hotchkiss, CO 81419*

(970) 260-9121

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