



Lowell Atwood, Stanford, Ky., was presented the American Hereford Association Innovator Award during the 2016 National Western Stock Show in Denver on Jan. 15. Pictured (l to r) are: 2016 AHA President Sam Shaw, Caldwell, Idaho; 2015-16 National Hereford Queen Taylor Belle Matheny, Mays Lick, Ky.; and Barbara and Lowell Atwood.

Making a Difference

Lowell Atwood was presented the 2016 Hereford Innovator Award.

by *Sara Gugelmeyer*

Setting out to help Hereford breeders get a fair price for their Hereford and Hereford-cross calves after decades of discrimination was no easy task. But it's one that Lowell Atwood took on willingly, because he knew it needed to be done.

Atwood was presented with the 2016 American Hereford Association Innovator Award during the National Western Stock Show Hereford Carload and Pen Show Jan. 15, 2016, in Denver. The innovator award annually recognizes someone who has benefitted the breed.

Hereford loyal

Lowell Atwood of Stanford, Ky., has been in the Hereford business for more than 40 years. His is a family operation called Peyton Well Polled Herefords, named after an old sulfur well on the farm. Lowell and his wife, Barbara, founded the business, but now his daughters, Beth and Linda, Linda's husband Paul and their children, Luke and Caleb are very involved.

They calve about 60 head of registered cows, but with retained heifers and bull prospects, the family manages about 125 head of registered stock year-round.

Peyton Well Polled Herefords raised one of the most well-known maternal sires in the Hereford breed — PW Victor Boomer P606. P606 was born in April 1996, sired by Remittal Boomer 46B





Pictured is the first-ever Kentucky Certified Hereford Influenced Sale in October 2009 at Bluegrass Stockyards South in Stanford, Ky. Lowell says he appreciates the Stockyards' commitment to making the sale a success.

and out of PW Victoria 964 8114. Even today, P606 daughters are in strong demand, and some of the best cows in the business have him in their pedigree.

Finding a solution

About seven years ago, Atwood's commitment to the Hereford breed prompted him to do something when he noticed Hereford feeder calves were unfairly discounted. He sought advice from John Woolfolk, who had organized the very successful Tennessee Hereford Marketing Program.

Atwood worked with the board of directors from the Kentucky Hereford Association to brainstorm ideas of how to help Hereford feeders sell better.

"We already knew a couple folks going to Tennessee every year and felt like we had enough cattle to have our own sale," Atwood says. "We got a lot of our ideas from the good folks in Tennessee."

In October 2009, the first-ever Kentucky Certified Hereford Influenced Sale was a success. And Atwood, along with a committee, has continued to organize biannual sales ever since. Cattle meet certain requirements to be eligible for the sale; then consigned cattle are grouped by weight and kind into load lots. This approach allows smaller producers to combine cattle and make a load which is much more attractive to buyers.

"The sale is each May and December and all the cattle are sorted, weighed and graded the day prior to the sale," explains AHA field representative John Meents.

"Cattle feeders looking for Hereford cattle that can go directly into the Certified Hereford Beef program purchase these feeders with confidence in load lots."

Kentucky Department of Agriculture Beef Cattle Marketing Specialist Tim Dietrich says, "Kentucky breeders and the Kentucky Hereford Association have done a great job promoting these sales to both sellers and buyers and that has played a major role in the success of both sales."

Meents says, "Lowell Atwood is the backbone of the success of the Kentucky Certified Hereford Influenced Sale."

Atwood has been in charge of coordinating the sale, but he is quick to point out that he hasn't done it alone. "We have a committee, I am just the one that does the legwork," he says. "And we've had tremendous support from the (Bluegrass South) Stockyards (of Stanford, Ky., which hosts every sale).

The sale has been a great success and is approaching 10,000 head sold, with a good majority going into yards eligible for Certified Hereford Beef. By far, the volume buyer has been Ford County Feed Yard of Ford, Kan. And the sale has accomplished what Atwood and the committee hoped it would — helping Hereford breeders sell feeders for a good price.

"Since the inception of the Kentucky Certified Hereford Feeder Calf Sale, the demand for Hereford genetics in the state of Kentucky has increased greatly," Meents says. "The price structure for Hereford bulls

and females is at an all-time high in Kentucky. Lowell Atwood has put his heart and soul into the Kentucky Certified Hereford Influenced Sale, and his effort has made a huge impact on the Hereford economy in that state.

But the cattle consigned don't only come from Kentucky but from five surrounding states as well. Atwood explains that about 450 to 600 head are usually sold in the spring and 700 to 900 in the fall. The sale has continued to grow with the December 2015 sale boasting 16 new consignors.

"We'd always like to have more numbers," Atwood says, "because the more loads we have the better the cattle sell, but we've had tremendous support."

He adds that he was honored that the AHA would choose him for this award.

"I am very grateful and very pleased that the Hereford Association felt like we are making a difference," Atwood says. "And as long as I feel up to it and feel like we're making progress, I will continue to help organize the sale." **HW**



Pictured is Atwood with feeders that will sell through the program May 12.