

The Extra Mile

National Junior Hereford Association members Cassie and Krista Allscheid aren't afraid of a little hard work. And they're reaping the rewards in countless ways.

by **Christy Couch Lee**

Chances are, not many 14-year-old girls can say they are responsible for their family's cow herd heat detection, cattle show fitting and halter breaking.

Even fewer would likely say they not only help with, but also enjoy, assisting their parents in chopping wood, fixing fence and undertaking the many tasks that come with life on the farm.

But that's exactly the case for eighth-graders and twins Cassie and Krista Allscheid. They and their parents, Eric and Cindie, manage their family's Shingle Oaks Polled Herefords, Waterloo, Ill.

The epitome of a family operation, the girls work alongside their parents in every aspect of the operation. Not only does the entire family see the benefits of their involvement, they also have fun while they do it.

For these young ladies, going the extra mile is the only option. Hard work is simply what they do.

Family first

Shingle Oaks Polled Herefords began when Eric's parents, Melvin and Jackie Allscheid, purchased their first Hereford cow in the mid-'70s.

Eric showed at local shows as a youth but says their primary focus has always been raising quality Hereford cattle.

"Showing is fun, but it's not our main focus," he says. "It's a good experience, but our main goal is to raise quality genetics."

Today, the Allscheids manage about 25 cows — mostly of Boyd Beef Cattle and Star Lake Cattle Ranch genetics —

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Cassie (left, front) and Krista (right, front) Allscheid work alongside their parents, Eric (left, back) and Cindie (right, back) in every aspect of their family Hereford operation.

with 100 % of breeding done through artificial insemination (AI).

“We focus on raising the best cows we can, with great udders and milk production, who also breed back and are very fertile,” Eric says.

The Allscheids also flush about three cows a few times a year for embryo transfer (ET) and implant embryos into cooperator herds, purchasing calves back at weaning.

Most of their genetics are offered for sale privately and through the Missouri Hereford Association (MHA) Missouri Opportunity Sale and the Heart of America Hereford Association Spring Sale. They also consign some semen and embryos to online sales throughout the year.

Plus, the Allscheids have a thriving freezer beef market, and customers often fill a waiting list to purchase sides or quarters of beef.

Cassie and Krista select show calves each year from the family’s herd to exhibit as bred-and-owned entries.

“The girls have so much pride, because they’ve been with their show heifers from Day 1,” Eric says.

In fact, the twins seem to have been born with a love for Hereford cattle and the farm on which they are being raised.

In their blood

“Their first word was ‘daddy.’ Their second word was ‘cow.’ And their third word was ‘mommy,’” Eric says with a laugh.

From the moment the girls could walk, they were alongside their dad checking cattle in the pastures and learning the ropes of managing a cattle operation.

“I knew once they turned 2, I wouldn’t have my girls anymore — they’d be out with their daddy,” Cindie says.

Eric says Cassie and Krista began helping on the operation by filling water troughs when they could barely reach the top of the tanks. As they’ve grown, so have their responsibilities.

Eric works as a carpenter, by trade. And Cindie works for an insurance company that insures large construction jobs. Because they work

off the farm, these parents have entrusted the twins with many of the day-to-day cattle responsibilities.

On any given day, Cassie and Krista are responsible for filling water tanks, cleaning pens and working the show cattle. In addition, the girls help with tattooing, branding, banding bull calves, vaccinating, deworming and dehorning.

Perhaps their greatest responsibility is checking heat after school and throughout the summers and weekends.

“I breed the cows based 100% on their heat checks,” Eric says. “Not only do they do the heat checks, they also have the cows caught and ready for breeding when I get home from work. We AI every cow on the farm — so I put that much trust in their abilities.”

Cassie and Krista also study pedigrees and offer input as Eric makes breeding decisions throughout the year. And, they take the lead at every show the family attends.

Studious showmen

The Allscheid girls attend several shows throughout the year, including the Illinois Junior Hereford Preview Show, the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE), the county fair, the Missouri State Fair, several preview shows and the American Royal.

2014 brought excitement for the family, as they earned reserve champion cow-calf honors at the 2014 American Royal and were presented the MHA Cow-Calf Pair of the Year award.

Cassie and Krista work as a team at each show they attend, and each knows her role and responsibilities. They have attended fitting camps to hone their skills, and the duo works together to fit every animal they exhibit.

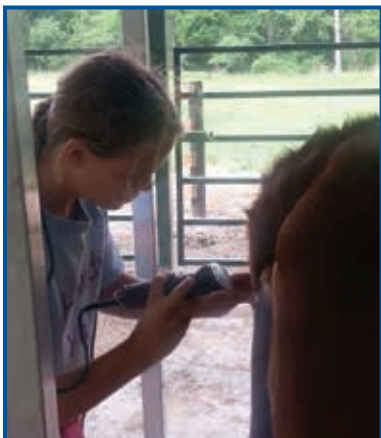
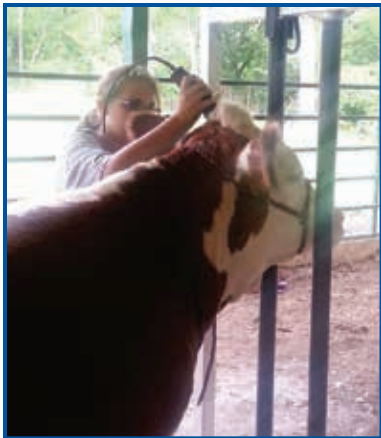
“I’m the washer, and Krista is the blower,” Cassie says. “When we fit, Krista does the tailhead and back legs, and I do the front legs. For the most part, there’s no arguing.”

Rich Hollis, Columbia, Ill., serves as Cassie and Krista’s 4-H club leader. He says their work ethic is impressive.

“They see what needs to be done and they do it,” he says. “They don’t argue or fight. They have a passion for their cattle, and it shows.”

Eric believes the twins do well at the halter because of their dedication to developing their skills.

“If you don’t love it, you won’t do it justice,” he says. “When other kids are



The Allscheid twins take pride in completing every aspect of fitting their cattle for show day. They have relied on advice and input from their parents, as well as respected breeders in the industry, to hone their skills.

out boating or camping, our girls are out on the wash rack. If your heart isn't in it, you won't do your best. They don't have to show — they want to."

Stepping back

Some parents might be a bit hesitant to turn over all fitting responsibilities to their teenage daughters. And Eric admits it's not always easy to step back and allow the girls to take the lead.

"I'm very particular, and I don't have a lot of patience," he says with a laugh. "The best way I've found to let them do the fitting is to just step back and let them go. The only way they will learn is to let them do it."

Attending larger shows also allows the girls the opportunity to learn from the best in the nation, Eric says.

"I encourage them to seek out the advice of others at those shows," he says. "Sometimes, they'll listen to someone else better than to their own parents. And we have a lot of good friends who have been more than willing to offer advice and give pointers."

Cassie says attending shows and events is a great way to hone your cattle knowledge and show skills.

"Go to as many cattle shows and fitting clinics as you can," she says. "You can learn so much by attending and paying attention."

Lessons learned

Cassie says raising Herefords has allowed her to learn from her mistakes.

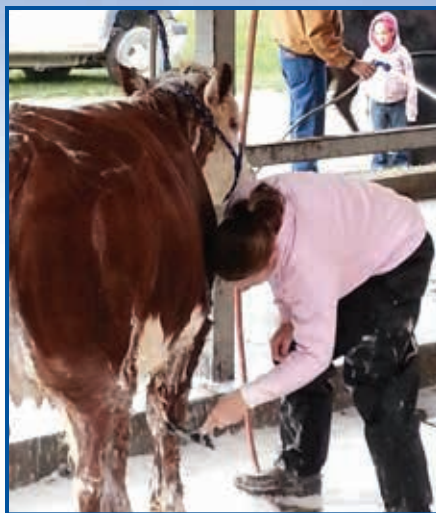
"If we make a mistake, and there have been a lot of them, we try to learn from them. We try not to make the same mistake twice, and we try to do better next time," she says.

And, if they don't place as well as expected, they all see the opportunity for learning and growth, Krista says.

"I like to be in the showing and have that competition," she says. "If I do happen to lose that day, I can be satisfied knowing I've lost to what the judge believed was a better animal, and I can learn from it."

Eric says he is proud of the girls for their ability to win, or lose, with grace.

"At the 2013 Junior National Hereford Expo in Kansas City, Cassie stood fourth in a class of eight," he recalls. "With the smile she had on her face as she exited the ring you would have thought she won the whole show. She could have been upset. But



The girls each have their own responsibilities with the cattle. Cassie enjoys the wash rack duties, and Krista loves to run the blower.

she stood in the middle and came out feeling like a winner."

And these parents find joy through their daughters in other ways, too.

"We get so many compliments on the girls, about how polite they are or how hard they work," Eric says. "To us, that's a bigger win than anything the cattle could do. We tell them all the time, 'Thank you for being who you are.'"

Eric says there's no one thing that brings him the most pride with his girls — it's in the everyday moments.

"It's the stuff that happens every day," he says. "Every day, they help just a bit more. It makes you proud as a dad when your children take on bigger and harder responsibilities. They never say, 'I don't want to.' They just get on their work clothes and load up the truck to help."

Cassie and Krista work side by side every day. And, Cindie says, they often do it without sibling rivalry or bickering.

"It's really wonderful, as a parent, to watch their teamwork," she says. "The fact that they work together and still want to hang out with each other and their parents at the end of the day? That's pretty cool."

Hollis says Eric and Cindie should be credited for the high expectations they placed on their daughters.

"They have high expectations for Cassie and Krista, and the girls live up to it well," he says. "I think kids should have high goals for their lives. And that's what makes these girls different. They have those goals, and they're not afraid to work hard to achieve them."

The Allscheids say youth and parents in the Hereford industry can gain

confidence and experience in the everyday moments.

A little advice

Eric believes the girls have such confidence with the cattle because they have been exposed to them from the start.

"I recommend not pushing the cattle on your child hard — but just allow the kids to be around the cattle, and allow them to do a bit more as they get older," he says.

Allowing work to be fun, and not just a chore, has been an incentive for the girls to become more involved, too, Eric says.

"When it came to work, my dad always tried to incorporate some fun," he recalls. "So I try to make work fun, too. And I don't use work as a punishment. Make work fun, and find another way to discipline."

It's also important to explain the "why" behind the "what" so that children understand the reasoning for the work, Eric says.

"We always try to show and explain why we are doing what we're doing," he says. "It's not just because mom and dad say to do it."

Because the girls give their all each day, Eric and Cindie say it's easy to go the extra mile for their daughters, too.

"When you see someone work as hard as our girls do, it makes it easier and more fun to do all of the extra work behind the scenes to make the trips to the JNHE and other shows happen," Eric says.

Krista says nothing could compare to the trust she and Cassie have earned.

"I wouldn't trade a professional fitting job for what Cassie and I do on show day," Krista says. "We sometimes need a little help getting two animals ready at once, and we don't have the time to get them ready by ourselves. But we always are involved in the fitting. We have the pride going into the ring, knowing we did the work. I wouldn't trade that for a professional fitter doing all of the work any day."

And, Hollis says, the rewards for their work will be seen for years to come.

"Cassie and Krista are a true example of hard work being rewarded," he says. "If you do it halfway, that's what you'll get. The rewards of hard work might not come instantly — they might pay off five or 10 years down the road. But I'm certain that these girls will see the rewards." **HW**