

# Perez Named Herdsman of the Year



Kyle Perez (center) was recognized as the 2009 Hereford Herdsman of the Year during the NWSS in Denver. Pictured presenting the award is Wes Hudson, American Hereford Association (AHA) Board member and chairman of the show and sale committee, Harrison, Ark., and Bill King, AHA president, Stanley, N.M.

Kyle Perez, Nara Visa, N.M., was selected as the 2009 Hereford Herdsman of the Year at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver. Perez was selected for the award by his peers — other Hereford herdsman and breeders — and honored prior to the selection of the champion horned Hereford bull on Jan. 17.

Kyle is a third-generation Hereford breeder. He grew up participating in junior Hereford activities, including serving on the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) board of directors and winning senior showmanship in 2002. In 2004, at his

final Junior National Hereford Expo, he was named the Junior Herdsman of the Year.

As a senior at Kansas State University, Kyle considered different options after graduation. He says he was talking to his dad one day about his future plans. "I told him what I really wanted to do was to go back to the ranch," Kyle says. "Dad's response was, 'Pack your bags and come on back.'"

So in May 2005, Kyle moved back home to work on the ranch and help continue the C&M Herefords tradition with his parents, Michael and Connie Perez.

The C&M herd includes both seedstock and commercial Herefords. The Perez family has bred and shown numerous national champions including the 2009 National Western reserve grand champion horned female. Kyle says his family values the showing and the opportunities it allows them in marketing their cattle.

Kyle's brother, Drew, and Kyle's wife, Tonya, also play important roles in the family ranch.

"This award is for Drew and I both," Kyle says. "Between him and I it's a team effort, even though he wasn't able to be in Denver during the show because he was judging. This award is for both of us."

The brothers are the only ones in history to both win the NJHA Herdsman of the Year Award. And Kyle is the first junior herdsman who went on to be named adult Herdsman of the Year. To read more about the Perez brothers' success, see September 2004 Page 122 and September 2008 Page 56.

## Mentors

"I've learned a lot from my parents and grandparents," Kyle says. "The opportunities they have given me have been amazing.

"Our parents have given us boys so much and enabled us to do the things we've wanted to do," he adds. "Mom has worked hard teaching school for 29 years and Dad has stuck with the cattle business building the competitive herd we have today from scratch."

Kyle thanks his maternal grandparents, Don and Mary Helen Kuper, for allowing his family to lease the ranch and to purchase their commercial herd after they had invested 55 years of hard work and dedication into building it. His paternal grandparents, Ernst and Jewel Perez, are respected registered Rambouillet breeders. "My Grandpa Perez exhibited the champion fleece in Denver 10 times and won the world once," Kyle says.

"He taught me that to be competitive it doesn't matter where you live or who



The Perez family exhibited the reserve grand champion horned female in Denver.



you are, it is what your heart and mind is set on.”

Kyle says that numerous Hereford breeders and herdsmen have influenced him through the years. Howard Fehlman, a former Hereford Herdsman of the Year, mentored Kyle and his family when they started showing Herefords in the early 1990s. Howard fit and showed many C&M-bred cattle prior to Kyle and Drew being old enough to go on the show road and manage the cattle themselves.

“It has been a real pride for me to watch Kyle grow up and see what he has accomplished in the Hereford business,” Howard says. “There is no quit in Kyle. What makes him a great herdsman is his work ethic — his willingness to stay and work till the job is done. He doesn’t do anything halfway. With Kyle, he is going to do it to the best of his ability, every time.”

Howard adds, “If I had a son, I’d be proud if he grew up to be like Kyle; I have a daughter, so I guess I’d be proud if she some day brings home someone like him.”

Others who have helped and guided Kyle through the years have been Chad Breeding, Wes Horn, Kevin Jensen, Todd Herman, and Gary and Kathy Buchholz, plus many others.

### His passion

Kyle says what he enjoys most about the cattle business is



Kyle Perez (left) is a third-generation Hereford breeder and was recently named Hereford Herdsman of the Year. The Perez family, including father, Michael, and brother, Drew, also pictured horseback, enjoy the ranching way of life on their northeastern New Mexico ranch.

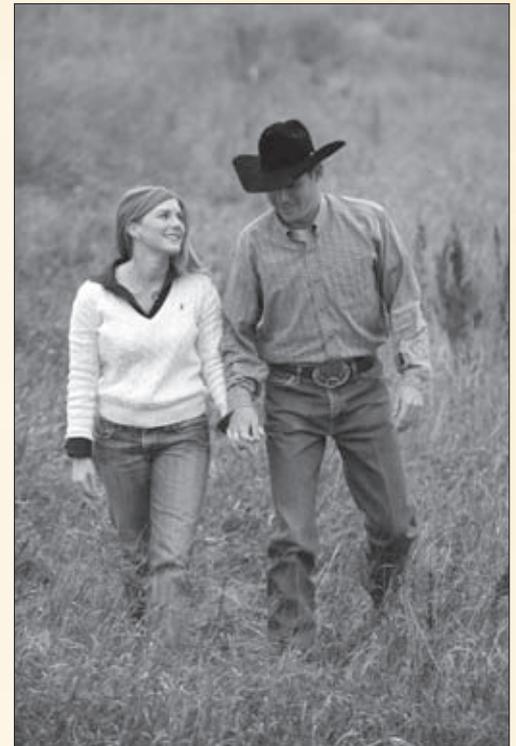
calving season and branding time. He admits he spends just as much time horseback and roping as he does with a pair of clippers.

“Calving time is an exciting time,” Kyle says. “You have worked hard all year to get them bred and take care of them and finally get to see if your breeding decisions worked or not.”

Whether on the ranch or at a show, the Perez family works as a team to make C&M a success and that is how Kyle likes it.

“When it is all said and done, it is not about the banners or trophies; it is having an internal satisfaction that your cattle looked better than the year before and that you are going the right direction with your breeding program.

“It’s an honor,” Kyle says about being named Herdsman, “In my opinion the biggest honor you can receive as a fitter or breeder.” **HW**



Newlyweds, Kyle and Tonya were married in June 2008. “The contribution she has made to this operation is so hard to explain,” Kyle says. “From helping out in the pens to helping with marketing, she has been a big asset. And most of all, she has made me a better person.”



Kyle says he is just as proud of his horsemanship and roping skills as he is of his clipping skills.