

Herdswoman

Bev Beeson, 1966 Polled Herdsman of the Year, continues to do what she loves — feeding, fitting and showing Herefords.

by **Tosha Powell**



Bev and her husband, Jack, are a well-respected herdsman team.



Just three years after the initial Polled Hereford Herdsman of the Year Award was announced in 1963, the first woman to earn the honorary title from among her male peers was Beverly “Bev” Beeson, Wayne, Neb.

Described once as petite and pert, Bev preferred the hustle and bustle of the cattle industry — feeding, fitting and showing — versus fussing over the frills and fancies usually identified with the so-called “fairer sex.”



Jack and Bev continue to show and sell cattle at the Nebraska Cattlemen’s Classic and Black Hills Stock Show each year.

Recalling the night of the herdsman banquet, Bev says, “After a long day of working in the barns, I had to get in a dress and high heels for the banquet. So, while we were sitting at our table, I kicked my heels off.” She remembers that when they called her name, many of her peers thought she was crawling under the table to hide.

“I had to crawl under the table to find my shoes!” Bev admits. “I wasn’t hiding! Although, I didn’t believe them. I thought the boys were pulling a prank.”

Bev and her husband, Jack, were the herdsmen at Hervale Farms near Wayne. While working at Hervale, the Beesons became a successful team at major livestock shows from coast to coast — so successful, in fact, that their peers knew what hard workers Bev and her husband were and honored Bev with the top award in the herdsman world.

“I was so honored,” Bev says. “Men and women weren’t really considered equals in those days. So for all the guys in the barn to think I was the one that deserved that award, it meant a lot to me. It still does.”

Throughout the years the Beesons have built their own herd of Polled Herefords that they operate under the name JB Ranch. Today JB Ranch is well-known in the Hereford industry.

“Hereford cattle has been good to us; we try to be good to them,” Bev says. With most Hereford families, the camaraderie found within the Hereford community is always worth boasting about. “We have wonderful friends through the Hereford business; I guess

you would call them our Hereford family,” Bev says.

As soon as the Beesons’ son, Jock, was old enough to hold a show stick he was helping his Mom and Dad at shows. From the time he was old enough to show as a junior member of the American Polled Hereford Association, his parents took him to every Junior National Polled Hereford Show. “We would join with other families in our area and travel together to the national shows,” Bev says. “Jock was very involved in the junior program, and not just showing. He also competed in speeches and was on the National Junior Polled Hereford Council.” Through the years Jock won both the junior and senior divisions of the speech and showmanship contests. Although Jock is grown, Bev and Jack still attend and support junior programs.

JB Ranch has grown throughout the years, building what Bev calls the “bull for the commercial man.”

“Our bulls don’t have calving problems; they have a small head with neat, clean shoulders,” Bev says. “Our cattle have sound feet and legs with plenty of durability. And, we are definitely getting more pigment than other herds.”

“We have moved from the smaller type cattle to the ‘yardstick’ type,” Bev continues. “Now we are producing more moderate-framed bulls working toward cattle with more muscle and natural fleshing.”

Bev adds she and Jack have been watching their cows’ udders. “We don’t tolerate bad udders,” Bev says.

The Beesons are still showcasing their cattle. “Jack’s at the wash rack and I take the stick,” Bev says. Just

“I was so honored. Men and women weren’t really considered equals in those days. So for all the guys in the barn to think I was the one that deserved that award, it meant a lot to me. It still does.”

last February the Beesons had the champion bull at the Nebraska Cattlemen’s Classic, the third high-seller at the Black Hills Stock Show and reserve champion and high-seller at Sioux Empire Winter Show.

The Beesons have given themselves to the Hereford breed. Bev was a founding member of the Nebraska Poll-ettes and Jack served on the Nebraska Polled Hereford Association board. Bev has also hand tooled 37 banners

for the Nebraska Polled Hereford queens through the years. Each year the queen gets to keep her banner that is donated by the Beesons and is made out of genuine cowhide leather.

“I love polled Herefords but God and country comes first,” Bev says. The Beesons are members of the First Presbyterian Church in Wayne and both Jack and Bev are elders and have served on numerous committees in the church.



Bev says there are many ways to fit cattle, but encourages people to “do it the right way.”

Although they don’t travel to as many shows as they once did, you can still find the Beesons taking pride in their Herefords and working as hard as ever to build a reliable herd. Bev’s advice to younger herdsman looking to build their skills, “Work hard. Be honest. Don’t be afraid to ask questions.” She says there are a lot of ways to fit cattle, so “do it the right way.” **HW**